DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 319 107 EA 021 750

AUTHOR	Baltzell, D. Catherine; Dentler, Robert A.
TITLE	School Principal Selection Practices: Five Case Studies.
INSTITUTION	Abt Associates, Inc., Cambridge, Mass.
SPONS AGENCY	National Inst. of Education (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	31 Jan 83
CONTRACT	400-800-0017
NOTE	168p.; Some attached exhibits contain small print. For the reports supplemented by this document, see ED 236 811 and ED 238 206.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC07 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Administrator Evaluation; *Administrator Selection; Assessment Centers (Personnel); *Board of Education Policy; Case Studies; Educational Improvement; Elementary Secondary Education; Equal Opportunities (Jobs); Internship Programs; Leadership Qualities; *Principals; Public Schools; Research and Development; *School Districts; Theory Practice Relationship

ABSTRACT

The National Institute of Education (NIE) initiated this first national study of the means by which school districts actually choose principals. NIE specified two main research goals for this study: (1) describe and characterize common practices in principal selection; and (2) describe and characterize promising alternatives for the improvement of common practice. This volume of case studies of promising alternatives for improvement is intended to serve as a supplement and companion to the more general reports that resulted from the initiative. These five case studies are based on interviews with 25 to 30 respondents in each school district studied, including central district administrators, principals, assistant principals, and school board members. The first chapter presents a brief overview of the study design and major research findings, along with some suggestions for using the case studies and discussion of questions for future study. Chapters 2 and 3 report on improved practices in Broward County and Hillsborough County, both in Florida. Chapters 4 and 5 describe administrative internship programs in Hayward, California, and Montgomery County, Maryland. Chapter 6 describes the National Association of Secondary School Principals' (NASSP) Assessment Center in Howard County, Maryland. (MLF)

****

* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *

****

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL SELECTION PRACTICES:
Five Case Studies

D. Catherine Baltzell, Ph.D.
Project Director

Robert A. Dentler, Ph.D.
Senior Sociologist

January 31, 1983

EA 021 750

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL SELECTION PRACTICES:
Five Case Studies

D. Catherine Baltzell, Ph.D.
Project Director

Robert A. Dentler, Ph.D.
Senior Sociologist

January 31, 1983

The work described in this publication was conducted with funding from the National Institute of Education, U.S. Department of Education, under Contract No. 400-800-0017. The opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect NIE position or policy, and no official endorsement by NIE or ED should be inferred.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For the past two and a half years, we have been trying to understand the ways, and the social as well as educational reasons for the ways, in which people in public school systems select school principals. We began our inquiry with the impression that those selection processes would illuminate the otherwise murky corridors of school leadership. We ended with the realization that some systems expend very exceptional and inventive foresight in their selection efforts, and we have summarized five cases of this ingenuity in this report in the belief that these examples will help other systems improve their practices.

This project could not have been accomplished without the help of many individuals and organizations.

First, our six Advisory Panelists proved exceptionally helpful throughout the life of the study. Their insights were critical in helping us conceptualize and design an effective field methodology. In addition, they played a key role in helping us to conceptualize and design the Phase 2 research on alternatives to common practice in principal selection. Panel members were: (1) Dr. Jacqueline P. Clement, Superintendent, Lincoln Public Schools, Lincoln, Massachusetts; (2) Dr. Emeral Crosby, Principal, Northern High School, Detroit, Michigan; (3) Dr. Effie Jones, Associate Executive Director, American Association of School Administrators; (4) Dr. Edward P. Keller, Deputy Executive Director, National Association of Elementary School Principals; (5) Dr. James Olivero, Association of California School Administrators; and (6) Ms. Carmen Pola, Co-Chair, Citywide Parent Advisory Council, Boston Public Schools.

Next, several educational organizations also played key roles. The National Association of Secondary School Principals made it possible for us to study their Assessment Center as one of our alternatives to common practice. Similarly, the Florida Council on Educational Management provided essential assistance in identifying and securing the cooperation of two of our other alternative districts. The Committee on Evaluation and Information Systems (CEIS) of the Council of Chief State School Officers also provided helpful commentary. We wish to extend our particular thanks to Dr. George Malo of Tennessee, who served as our CEIS coordinator and provided many useful suggestions, particularly concerning our sampling of alternative practices.

Further, several staff members here at Abt Associates made essential contributions. Dr. Jose Llanes, Aleen Grabow, Janet Wertheimer, Susan Brighton and Diane Kell served as members of our field research teams. Their data collection skills helped to provide a rich and detailed data base. Karen Hudson and Ann Zwetchkenbaum worked many painstaking hours preparing manuscripts and managing contractual details of budgets and correspondence, while Patricia McMillian and Judy Layzer provided additional (and essential) typing support. Nancy Irwin contributed valuable manuscript editing services. And, Dr. James Molitor, Dr. Kent Chabotar, Dr. Karen Seashore Louis, and Shelia Rosenblum all provided helpful reviews and commentaries in the early stages of the project. In addition, Dr. Louis made a special contribution as technical reviewer.

Finally, we wish to express our deepest appreciation to two groups without which the study could not have been undertaken. First, our thanks go to the National Institute of Education (NIE), which sponsored the study. Second, our thanks go to the 15 school districts who hosted our inquiry. Without exception, the staff of these districts gave freely of their time and energies, and worked hard to make certain that we understood both the successes and the failures of their approaches to principal selection. In all 15 districts, we met highly professional and committed educators, who evinced deep concern about the problems involved in selecting educational leaders. Without their insights and experiences, their time and energy, this study would not have been possible.

Table of Contents

Page

1.0 The Project: Purpose and Summary.........................1

2.0 Improved Practices in Broward County, Florida..............11

3.0 Improved Practices in Hillsborough County, Florida.........39

4.0 Use of the Internship in Hayward Unified School District, California....................................65

5.0 Use of the Internship in Montgomery County Public School System, Maryland...................................85

6.0 The National Association of Secondary School Principals' Assessment Center in Howard County, Maryland...107

Appendix A: Principal Selection Materials from Broward County, Florida

Appendix B: NASSP Assessment Center Standards of Quality

Exhibits and Figures

Page

Exhibit 3-1. A Guide for Rating--and Selecting--Administrators (Hillsborough County, Florida)........................45

Exhibit 4-1. Announcement for Administrative Training Program, Hayward Unified School District, California...........66

Exhibit 4-2. Announcement for Administrative Training Program, Hayward Unified School District, California...........67

Exhibit 4-3. Description of Training Program......................69

Exhibit 4-4. Administrative Training Program......................71

Exhibit 6-1. NASSP Assessment Center General Design Model..........113

Exhibit 6-2. The Howard County Public School System Assessment Center Design Model...................................114

Exhibit 6-3. NASSP Assessment Center Agreement.....................115

Exhibit 6-4. Skills to be Assessed................................121

Exhibit A-1. School-Based Manager Application Form, Broward County, Florida.......................................A-1

Exhibit A-2. Recommendation Forms, Broward County, Florida.........A-13

Exhibit A-3. Screening Committee Rating Forms, Broward County, Florida.......................................A-15

Exhibit A-4. Interview Committee Rating Form, Broward County, Florida.......................................A-17

CHAPTER 1

The Project: Purposes and Summary

Purposes of the Project

The identification, selection, placement, and role performance of school principals has always been a matter of deep concern and interest to educators. In recent years, however, concern about these matters has intensified as the social and economic pressures on public education have expanded. The role of the principal has become increasingly complex and cross-pressured. At the same time, research has increasingly confirmed the notion that school principals can have critical impacts on teaching and learning. In fact, at the same time that the role of the principal has come to be seen as perhaps the most complex balancing act in public education, it has also come to be seen as the pivotal position for effective educational leadership and renewal of public confidence.

In response to these concerns, the National Institute of Education (NIE) initiated this first national study of the means by which school districts actually choose principals. Although there is widespread agreement on the importance of the principal's role, prior to this study there has been surprisingly little information available on how these critical educational leaders are selected or how they might best be selected.

Recognizing that better understanding of principal selection is becoming increasingly important as the pressures on public education continue to mount and as a large portion of the current cadre of principals retires and requires replacement, NIE specified two main research goals for this study: (1) describe and characterize common practices in principal selection; (2) describe and characterize promising alternatives for the improvement of common practice. The results of these investigations are presented in two publications: (1) Selecting American School Principals: Research Report by D. Catherine Baltzell and Robert A. Dentler; and (2) Selecting American School Principals: A Sourcebook for Educators by D.

Catherine Baltzell and Robert A. Dentler. Both of these publications are available from NIE. This volume of case studies of promising alternatives for improvement is intended to serve as a supplement and companion to these more general reports.

The remainder of this chapter presents a brief overview of our study design and major research findings, along with some suggestions for using the case studies and discussion of questions for future study. Chapters 2 and 3 report on improved practices in Broward County, Florida, and Hillsborough County, Florida. Chapters 4 and 5 describe administrative internship programs in Hayward, California, and Montgomery County, Maryland. Chapter 6 describes the National Association of Secondary School Principals' (NASSP) Assessment Center in Howard County, Maryland.

Study Design

This study has been designed and executed in two phases. Phase 1 focused on describing and characterizing common practices in principal selection. Using a quasi-ethnographic method of inquiry, field research teams closely investigated selection practices in ten randomly sampled school districts with enrollments of 10,000 or more students. Following the field work, cross-case analyses of the ten districts were conducted to reveal both variations and commonalities in selection practices.

Phase 2 led directly from the findings of Phase 1, and focused on describing and characterizing alternatives to common practices. Based on the widespread needs revealed by Phase 1 for more information on ways of upgrading selection criteria, conducting behavioral assessments of candidates' performance, and developing approaches to selection that are compatible with local customs, three types of alternatives were selected for study: (1) assessment centers; (2) district-operated internships; and (3) promising or especially successful conventional practices. The latter type of alternative was chosen to provide useful models for educators who do not wish to invest in assessment centers or internships, both of which can be costly, and to illustrate immediate changes that could be made should a district desire to change. Through a nomination process, five districts were selected to represent these three types of alternatives. Fieldwork and cross-case analyses for Phase 2 were very similar, albeit not identical, to the methodologies used in Phase 1.

These five (Phase 2) case studies are based on interviews with 25 to 30 respondents in each district, including central district administrators, principals, assistant principals, and school board members. In addition, written policy statements, demographic data and personnel data were made freely available to us for study. All five Phase 2 districts (and the ten Phase 1 districts) were completely open and candid about the problems and weaknesses of their selection systems, as well as their successes and strengths. In both phases of our study, we found educators at all levels of the hierarchy to be extraordinarily eager and interested in discussing principal selection with us. Clearly, the topic is of considerable interest and concern to many educators.

These five case study reports are limited in three respects, however: (1) they lack direct interview data with candidates who have passed the initial steps in the processes and yet have failed to secure appointments; (2) they do not include information from interviews with teachers; and (3) they do not include information from interviews with parents.

Major Research Findings

Cross-site analysis of the Phase 1 data revealed that, while the technical variations in approaches to principal selection are substantial, there are striking commonalities across districts.

First, the top leadership--that is, the superintendent and his key deputies--firmly controls the process. However, the degree of control that these leaders are able to exercise is constrained by local norms, customs, notions of what a principal is "supposed to be," and traditions of "how we select principals here."

Second, the top leadership's drive for control results from their need (and responsibility) to reconcile many competing goals and exigencies as they make each appointment decision. These issues include--in addition to the need to appoint adequately capable individuals--promoting staff, preserving seniority, protecting staff in anticipation of layoffs, transfering principals who are having trouble, satisfying parent communities and faculties, meeting equity requirements, and responding to local political conditions. Among these many concerns, educational leadership merits become only one--and not always the most important--element to consider.

Third, given the many competing aims involved in any appointment decision, and given the fact that "educational leadership" is difficult to define and measure, "fit" or "image" often come to dominate the selection criteria. While much sincere concern about the "importance of selecting the best educational leaders" abounds, it seldom translates into highly specific experience or training requirements for candidates. Rather, once candidates meet the basic criteria of state certification and a few years teaching/administrative experience (and often some graduate work), they generally compete on the basis of their "fit" to pervasive local values and customary ways of behaving. And, "fit" often seems to be expressed most eloquently through physical presence and social manner.

Fourth, women and minorities are increasing their memberships in candidate pools and among the ranks of principals. While the power of the "fit" criteria works against them, the pressure for affirmative action during the past decade has had notable results. Even in districts where there is no court order and equity issues have not been litigated for years, the leaders who control principal appointments often feel at least an obligation (and frequently a genuine commitment) to appoint women and minorities.

Fifth, although capable and able principals were observed and interviewed everywhere in Phase 1, the process that led to their selection could not be generally characterized as merit-based and equity-centered. While merit and equity could and did emerge, special local goals, aims, and conditions very frequently determined the selection process. In short, the general conventions shaping principal selection seem to be overdetermined by local district management considerations and by local customs, and only minimally or exceptionally conditioned by concerns about educational leadership and equity, particularly the former.

By the time Phase 1 was completed, we were convinced from the evidence that technical changes in practices could not possibly modify these overall patterns. In fact, we were tempted to try to reconceptualize the functions of the principalship and to propose that structural changes in the delivery of educational services could not be expected to result from changes in the techniques of selecting principals.

Findings from the five Phase 2 systems both confirmed these findings and forced us to revise our understanding. The Phase 2 sites showed us that, under some conditions at least, districts can organize their aims, goals, and processes and deeply commit to merit and equity in principal selection. While there are indeed many cross-pressures working against this, the pressures are surmountable.

The specific technical process features of such efforts at improvement are not as important as the basic commitment to the aim of merit and equity, which must be widely shared and doggedly pursued if success is to be achieved. Districts that have made this sort of commitment--which can be costly, for it will reverberate throughout the system--are capable of devising techniques most appropriate for their local settings. However, districts that have made this commitment also understand that the techniques alone will not do the job. For instance, a particular technique may be exceptionally powerful psychometrically (e.g., an assessment center), or it may mark a dramatic and symbolically critical change from former practice (e.g., a well publicized screening vs. a former patronage system of appointments). Nevertheless, if the technique is implemented without having been deeply connected to the deeper aims and goals, it will ring hollow and will soon be subverted to the true aims the district is pursuing.

This is not to say that techniques are unimportant, however. While our findings mitigate against prescribing any one technique of principal selection as the ideal, it is evident that a clear and widely publicized shift towards more merit-based and equity-oriented approaches can be used to signal a corresponding shift in district aims. Further, as the five Phase 2 districts showed (and as is apparent in these case studies), certain technical approaches can enhance a districts' ability to prepare and assess candidates, as well as solve other selection problems.

Using the Case Studies

Chapters 2 through 6 offer detailed descriptions of principal selection processes in five school systems chosen for study because of their reputations for innovation in personnel management. These system descriptions are presented in full because our study demonstrated two things which make it desirable to provide wholistic treatments for leaders interested in the finer detail of how some districts have gone about improving their principal selection processes. First, the principal selection process is not an exportable technology; it is a series of organizational aims and practices which are profoundly interlocked with local customs. Elements in the process can be examined and fitted into a developing system, but this is best undertaken when their contextual relationship to the whole is spelled out in full. Second, local leaders are capable of devising an improved principal selection process which they can fit into their systems. They neither want nor do they need a portable kit of mechanical procedures. However, "stories" of how other districts have gone about devising locally appropriate improvements can serve as a useful stimulus for thought and discussion. The case reports on these five districts are therefore presented intact. We believe they can be of great informational assistance to persons considering improvements they wish to develop on their own, and each of the five Phase 2 districts can also be contacted for further particulars.

The Phase 2 districts differ in degree, not in kind, from the Phase 1 districts. Some of the improvements in principal selection processes found in Phase 2 were present in part in some Phase 1 districts. However, the two sets of districts differed substantially in scope and intensity of policy commitment to school leadership improvement, with Phase 1 districts making some incremental moves in that direction and with Phase 2 districts making relatively deep and sustained changes.

Readers who decide they have a serious investment in improving principal selection may wish to scan Chapters 2 through 6, and then double back and study the case reports in detail, as their interest in a particular alternative dictates. We imagined that superintendents, personnel directors, and some board members might choose to create a study group which would later turn into a planning team. Such a group may want to consider the merits of adopting a *whole* principal selection process as a comparatively intact system, perhaps choosing one closest to their requirements, and then modifying elements to match it to unique local conditions. All five Phase 2 districts offer quite comprehensive approaches. They simply emphasize some features more than others.

Our study does not make a conclusive case for innovations in the principal selection process as educationally strategic in effects. Formal evaluation of the results of changes in methods by which principals are selected or of the comparative virtues of different methods of selection--particularly with regard to outcomes of student learning or other school effects--was beyond the scope of our inquiry. Nevertheless, the educators we interviewed in Phase 2 have reached the conclusion that principal selection improvements and innovations are indeed educationally strategic, and they are emphatic in their testimony. Many of those we interviewed in Phase 1 are moving towards this conclusion. Our applied research aim was more modest, however. It was to discover and report out the state of practice in principal selection and, along the way, to identify some promising developments for improvement. Chapters 2 through 6 do this, but they do not offer evaluative proof of effects and they do not enable us to *prescribe* the practices that should be adopted. They simply demonstrate how local districts have taken steps to change their leadership selection operations in ways that appear to them and to us to result in the appointment of *very* competent educators equipped to lead across a wide range of duties, and in greater response to the imperative of increased equity for women and minorities.

Questions for Future Study

We have noted that positive strides are being made by educational researchers to refine and build a knowledge base pertinent to the preparation, selection, and improved use of the talents of school principals. Especially compelling evidence can be expected to grow out of NASSP's work in developing assessment centers and out of the Florida Council on Educational Management's studies of effective principals. The NIE is also coordinating and sponsoring continuing research on the role of the principal, and findings should result from the federal Commission on Excellence in Education and from the Carnegie-sponsored High School Study project begun in 1981.

In our opinion, these and other concurrent studies in public management will prove adequate not only to frame the basic questions about the principal's role and the conditions conducive to its optimal performance, but also to contribute powerfully to assisting educators. Local school systems where principal selection process changes have been or are being introduced could enhance knowledge tremendously by conducting objective, research-based evaluations of school and student effects associated with changes in administrative leadership. We recognize that those systems are extremely low on research resources, but better collaboration between personnel, staff development, and research professionals already in place and already gathering pertinent data in the course of performing other duties is a very feasible means of stretching the local research dollar. Superintendents and other district officers who expend hundreds of hours a year in selecting principals need to learn just what difference their efforts make educationally. Some such applied research and evaluation goes on now; we learned of it in both phases of our project. Almost none of it goes beyond the stage of intramural memoranda, however. Even where we found strong cooperation between districts and university faculty in educational administration, we did not see evidence of sustained scholarship on the questions of effects or of costs and benefits.

Finally, our project has made us keenly aware of the extent to which innovation in principal selection is but a part of local school system renewal and improvements undertaken jointly between boards and staffs and with strong support from parent leaders. Local systems are capable of profound and continuous self-renewal, and their capacity to achieve it merits very serious, long term inquiry. Educational research tends to fragment its targets of inquiry. It focuses intently on student achievement or classroom and school effects on one side and on broad issues of finance or policy on the other, but the local system _qua_ subcommunity of culturally determined, formally organized patterns of action often suffers from neglect. Many of those we interviewed--superintendents, principals, teachers, board members--are working very hard on district renewal. They want better answers to the question of what makes a public school _system_ work well. Principal selection improvements are viewed by them in this strategic context and our analysis concurs with this relationship. Much more research is needed, however, on the underlying questions about the treatable conditions which lead to local school system development.

CHAPTER 2

Improved Practices in Broward County, Florida

Introduction

Our search for approaches other than intern programs and assessment centers for improving principal selection procedures led us to the Florida Council on Educational Management. Created in the Spring of 1981 by the Florida Legislature and led by Mr. Cecil Golden, Associate Deputy Commissioner, Florida Department of Education, the Council's mission is to improve the performance of Florida's principals by various means, including a variety of research, demonstration, and administrator development projects.

The Council has initiated intensive research on the role performance of high-performing principals. High performance has been defined in terms of: (1) the longitudinal academic achievement of students in the school; (2) the perceptions of parents and community about the school; and (3) superintendents' rankings of the principals in their districts. As a result of various longstanding statewide accountability mandates and the Council's energetic efforts, the principal performance data base on these three measures comprises information from a census rather than a sample. The data are available for every principal in Florida, and are in a form that permits a variety of aggregations. In addition to principal role performance, principal selection and development are topics of interest to the Council, and its staff has surveyed Florida districts to obtain descriptions of selection policies and procedures and administrator development programs.

Thus, we asked the council to identify those Florida districts that had both a high concentration of high-performing principals (as defined by the Council) and what appeared to be sound selection procedures.

With Mr. Golden's support, the Council undertook this task and recommended several districts to us, one of which was Broward County.

Broward's superintendent, Dr. William T. McFatter, welcomed our inquiry via Broward's representative to the Council, Marilyn Sweeney, Director of Management Development. Under Dr. McFatter's auspices, Ms. Sweeney hosted and coordinated our five-day visit in March 1982.

In this chapter, we first describe Broward's selection process; second, the historical context within which that process has developed; third, participants' perceptions of the process; and finally, the future and some costs and benefits of the process.

The Selection Process[1]

Broward County's principal selection process has three main elements: (1) the Eligibility List, which essentially sets forth basic selection criteria and career ladders; (2) the Vacancy Screening, which rates eligible candidates against the specific requirements of each vacancy; and (3) the Vacancy Interview, which selects the finalists from among the most highly rated eligible candidates. The process is complex, for it is characterized by various checks and balances to help ensure the highest standards of fairness and professionalism as well as the confidence of various interest groups, and it is closely tied to the district's affirmative action plan. It may also be termed a living process, for it is part of both the district culture in general and the mindset of the present administration to constantly study and, if need be, change policies and procedures in the interest of quality. In fact, as we prepare this report, the administration is beginning innovations and changes to "plug some of the holes" in the present selection process. And similarly, the present system grew directly from attempts to "clean up" the weaknesses of the previous process.

The process begins with the compilation of the promotion lists or Eligibility Lists, which contain the names of all qualified candidates for each type of school administrative position (principal or assistant principal). From the candidate's view, qualification for the list is a rigorous undertaking that involves meeting both state certification requirements and basic district standards of training and experience, which go beyond the state demands.

---

[1] Much of the material in this section is drawn from the very comprehensive recruitment and screening policy statements and materials promulgated by the Personnel Office under the leadership of Dr. Benjamin F. Stephenson, Associate Superintendent for Personnel.

With regard to training, the district requires that candidates for principalships and assistant principalships have at least a master's degree, be certified in administration and supervision, and have completed at least one graduate course in each of three areas: school law, school finance and/or budgeting, and an appropriate topic in curriculum or personnel management. In addition to the administration and supervision certification, candidates for the elementary principalships are required to hold certification in elementary education or some elementary subject area.

The basic requirement for courses in school law, finance, and curriculum or personnel management was added as a direct consequence of Broward County's commitment to decentralization and school-based management. Under this organizational model, principals have the responsibility for developing, staffing and implementing instructional programs tied to the needs of the particular school's students. This includes considerable control over and responsibility for school budgeting and fiscal planning, staffing, and program development. As one of the three pilot districts in Florida to implement school-based management (which is a statewide, legislated initiative) in the early 1970s, Broward takes pride in its role as a model. We often heard comments such as: "Oh yes, school-based management is alive and well in Broward County," or, "Oh yes, we were one of the first and we really carry it out here!" Superintendent McFatter is himself deeply committed to this administrative model.[2]

---

[2] Another indication of the extent to which school-based management has permeated the district is the fact that principals and assistant principals in Broward are commonly and widely known by the titles school-based administrator and administrative assistant. This nomenclature emphasizes their managerial role and autonomy.

Candidates for the assistant principalship are required to have at least five years of school-level experience, three of which must be at the level they are seeking to manage. Similarly, candidates for the principalship must have at least five years of school-level experience, all of which must be at the level they are seeking to manage. In addition, secondary school principalships require that candidates "have completed three years of administrative experience appropriate to the type of vacancy." In practice, this almost always means an assistant principalship within the district. (In a few cases, however, it may mean a principalship in another district, a series of positions as a summer school administrator, a series of short-term appointments as an acting principal or head teacher, or some combination of these.)

This administrative experience requirement is not in effect for elementary principalships as a matter of Broward policy, simply because the district has assistants for only the largest elementary schools. However, in practice a career ladder has developed around various curriculum leadership positions feeding into a modest elementary principal internship program. The elementary principals of the past few years have generally come up through the ranks from classroom teacher; to grade-level chair or planning team leader; to school representative to the area curriculum council (and perhaps from here to the district curriculum council); to intern; to principal (or perhaps assistant principal in one of the larger schools).

This small internship program is notable not only for the preparation it provided many of Broward's principals, but also for the seeds of support for the internship concept that it planted and nurtured over the years. Its positive reception has led the district to develop an expanded internship program for elementary candidates, the Potential Administrator Training (PAT) Program. Funded by the Florida Council on Educational Management, PAT will begin at the elementary level in fall 1982 and will become a required step on the administrative career ladder. (The original internship program was shut down in 1981-82 while the new PAT program was being planned.) Under the leadership of Ms. Sweeney, the new PAT program will provide a year's training to participants, including intensive orientation sessions, seminars, on-the-job training experiences, and opportunities to strengthen areas of individual need. The PAT experience will be more systematic and varied than the original program, and evaluation of candidates will be more focused. After successfully completing PAT, candidates will compete as usual for positions as school administrators.

In order to establish that the eligibility requirements have been met, the candidate prepares and files with Personnel a detailed application. The application requires specification of teaching and administrative experience and educational background; evidence of the professional, organizational and management, human relations, and communications skills the candidate wishes to present; specification of community participation; and description of any academic preparation beyond the terminal degree. In addition, the candidate must list the names of references, including all supervisors of one year's duration during the five years preceeding the application date. (A sample application form is included in Appendix A as Exhibit A-1.)

The application is extremely important, for it is the basis for the Vacancy Screening rating process to come. Completing it is a major undertaking, and candidates spend considerable time and effort on it. It is widely perceived to be critical, and only the naive candidate gives it less than full attention. Once the application is received by Personnel, it is reviewed to ascertain that the applicant indeed meets the basic state and district requirements and is thereby eligible.

At this point, Personnel also sends out standard recommendation forms to the references listed by the applicant. Although these are not needed for the eligibility review, they will be required later for the Vacancy Screening. The recommendation forms (see Appendix A, Exhibit A-2) are empirically designed to help counter excessive subjectivity or halo effects from the recommending supervisor. The respondent is forced to choose only eight from a list of 20 qualities describing the applicant. On face value, all 20 qualities are highly desirable and credible characteristics. Hence the probability is high that the respondent will choose eight qualities that do indeed accurately reflect the applicant.

However, the 20 items are empirically weighted on the basis of a survey of school administrators conducted by the research department. The weights are a closely guarded secret. Thus, when a respondent selects an item as descriptive of a candidate, she does not know whether it has a high or a low weight, or rather, whether it is considered a highly desirable characteristic by Broward's school administrators.

Candidates can and do file applications for placement on the Eligibility List at any time, even at the same time an application is filed for a particular, announced vacancy. Personnel reviews an application immediately upon receiving it, and notifies the applicant of disposition. However, formal advertising in a variety of media (newspapers, professional journals, district newsletters and circulars) is done at least once a year for the Eligibility List in order to encourage qualified candidates to submit applications. In keeping with the affirmative action plan, special efforts are made to recruit minorities and women through various organizational and media contacts, as well as through internal recruitment and encouragement. The timing of the annual Eligibility List advertisement varies somewhat depending on fall hiring projections, but usually occurs sometime in the spring.

The Eligibility List advertising is critical, for the vacancies themselves are not heavily advertised. The net effect of this feature (and various other logistical aspects of the process) is to encourage almost exclusive promotion from within the district, although this is not written policy. Our interviewees generally characterized Broward as a system that promotes almost exclusively from within. A few expressed varying degrees of concern about this heavy reliance on "insiders," but for the most part our respondents were quite comfortable with it. While recognizing that inbreeding and cronyism can be significant dangers in a system that promotes heavily from within, many administrators (and school staff) pointed out to us that Broward is a very large district that can draw from almost 8000 instructional staff to fill 376 school administrator positions. In addition, it attracts this instructional staff from all over the country.

When we first heard this argument, we were frankly skeptical. However, as our visit progressed, we encountered substantial and widespread affirmation of this rationale. The district and school staff that we met, both as part of our study and in passing, were from all over America (and other parts of Florida), and these "immigrants" overwhelmingly outnumbered the Broward natives. Further, many of the principals and assistant principals we interviewed had entered the district from outside as teachers, working up through the career ladders to become insider candidates for principal or assistant principal.

When a specific principalship or assistant principalship vacancy occurs, special criteria in addition to the basic state and district criteria may be established to reflect particular school needs (for instance, a special need to upgrade curriculum). The special criteria are developed in writing by both the Associate Superintendent for Personnel, Dr. Stephenson, and the supervising Area (subdistrict) Superintendent (if the vacancy is a principalship) or the supervising principal (if it is an assistant principalship). A copy is sent to the affirmative action unit, the Office of Comprehensive Planning for Equal Opportunities (OCPEO). Special criteria must be developed well in advance of any vacancy screening and included with the position advertisement. In addition, special criteria must be clearly and specifically job-related.

School-specific vacancy announcements are sent by mail to all on the Eligibility List and are posted throughout the district. Little if any advertising is done beyond this. Those on the Eligibility List who wish to apply for the position (or positions) apply by letter of intent to Personnel. If a candidate does not apply, she is not carried into the next step of the process, the Vacancy Screening.

The Vacancy Screening is conducted by a Vacancy Screening Committee which is established to review the applications and rate each applicant for the specific vacancy at hand. The composition of the Committee is specified as a matter of policy and includes: the Associate Superintendent for Personnel or his representative; the Director of OCPEO or his representative;

the appropriate curriculum director for the level being screened; and two principals from the level being screened. In addition, the district seeks to obtain minority and female representation on the Committee. This is not usually difficult, since both are now well represented among principals and central administrators in Broward County.

There are two basic reasons for specifying the composition of the Committee so carefully. First, different points of view and key role perspectives are brought into play. Second, spreading the constituencies helps to minimize the likelihood that a particular candidate would be intimately known to (and perhaps favored by) all or a significant portion of the Committee.

Using the rating forms shown in Exhibit A-3 (Appendix A) the Committee conducts blind ratings of the applicants based on information contained in a coded examination folder prepared by Personnel. The folder contains the application submitted by the candidate at the entry point of the Eligibility List, with the first two pages removed (see Exhibit A-1). The folder also contains the applicant's references.

Each Committee member independently examines the data and rates each candidate, assigning a numerical score on a four-point scale to each of 22 items. In one sense, these ratings are subjective; that is, there are no set standards for scoring each item. In another sense, however, they are objective, for the role investment and professional pride of the various Committee members come quickly into play to define the standard. The principals, for instance, usually have very strong notions of what being a principal is all about, and, as several of our interviewees described, will not hesitate to fault applicants for lack of experience at grade level or weak curriculum background.

A number of our respondents who had served on Screening Committees commented that the rating is not always blind. As one noted, "If you knew anything about them [potential candidates], you knew who they were." This is no doubt the case, for there are many opportunities for district leaders and aspiring leaders to meet, work together, and get to know each other. Hence, it is almost inevitable that the alert administrator will spot someone he knows among the group of aspirants. However, as our informants were equally quick to point out, seldom could they identify all the applicants. Hence, the blind procedure in a sense is a matter of distributing probabilities--it is highly unlikely that all Committee members will be able to identify conclusively all the applicants from the coded materials at hand. It is also unlikely that all the members will be predisposed to favor or disfavor the same candidate. Thus, each applicant is bound to have at least some completely blind ratings.

In order for a candidate to forge ahead at this point, there must be fairly strong consensus among the raters that the individual has done "more" in most of the 22 areas. Competition is keen, and a difference of a very few points is often all that lies between elimination and moving to the the next step in the process. Certainly the sheer ability of the candidate to express himself through the application (and references) is a factor at this point. However, "the word is out" about this fact, and the candidates learn very quickly how best to fill out their application, often seeking help and advice from peers and successful candidates.

It is also at this point that the unavoidable limitations on the blindness of the ratings tend to act as something of a check on any temptation toward excessive self-inflation the candidates might have. While the candidates generally do not know who is on the Committee, they are well aware that one or more members may know them well enough to recognize them. Since one cannot be sure exactly how this might work out, it is generally considered "not a good idea" to inflate one's qualifications. (In addition, each candidate signs the application, thereby certifying that the information is true and giving personal permission to check via phone calls, etc.)

Each Committee member is required to sign the rating form. This permits informal monitoring of scoring patterns for halo effects. These data do not affect ratings in any way, but rather help the district identify persistent procedural problems that need correcting.

After all the applicants are rated--a procedure which may take quite some time depending on the number of candidates--the head of Personnel, Dr. Stephenson, compiles and averages the ratings and the references to obtain a single "sum-of-the-ratings" score for each candidate. Excepting vacancies for which there are special criteria, a candidate's score remains in effect for one year, after which time he must reapply and be re-rated.

The candidates are then ranked in order of their scores (which are not made public), and the top four to six (or eight in the event of extremely close ratings for the sixth position) are selected to proceed to the next step in the process, the Vacancy Interview. The exact number selected for this Vacancy Interview List depends in part on the closeness of the scores and in part on equity considerations. For instance, if the top four candidates are all white females, the list will usually be extended to include some blacks and males. However, at this point in its equity history, Broward County does not have any significant problems with the race and sex composition of its various candidate pools. One respondent's comment on this issue was typical of remarks we heard from all constituencies: "We don't really pay much attention to that any longer--inservice, grooming, brings lots of people to the top and the pools at every stage are pretty well representative." OCPEO data support this perception.

This is not to imply that concern for equity has fallen by the wayside, however. There is a great deal of informal monitoring of equity by Personnel, OCPEO, and the top administration, as well as formal monitoring (at the district's request) by the Desegregation Center at the School of Education at the University of Miami. In addition, the various constituencies--blacks, women, white males--keep a close and watchful eye on every stage of the selection process. As one administrator commented, "This process is highly monitored informally. Everyone looks at it with a great deal of suspicion. The special interest groups are always checking and balancing each other."

The candidates who do not make the cut for the Vacancy Interview List are informed by letter that they are not to be carried forward and are encouraged to arrange a conference with Personnel for further clarification. Many perceive the lack of more intensive career counseling and development opportunities at this point to be a serious weakness in the process. As a rule, candidates get no personal attention through this stage, for it is essentially a "paper process." Further, unless the candidate actively seeks counseling and feedback, it is not forthcoming. Several of our informants commented that this can be very discouraging to good candidates who need to be supported for future tries and, at the same time, perhaps too encouraging for the candidate who needs to undertake substantial development work or to face the fact that he has reached the limit of his abilities. In fact, this general perception and desire to improve were key motivating factors in the 1981 establishment of Boward's Management Development Program under the leadership of Ms. Sweeney. It is hoped that a total, interwoven system of selection and development can ultimately be designed, tested and implemented. This will enable following up of selection steps with sound developmental training, and will also make training a critical part of the pre-selection career ladders.

Broward's policy provides the opportunity for the immediate supervisor of a position or the Assistant Superintendent for Personnel to add one name each to the Vacancy Interview List of four to six candidates. For instance, a principal can add to her assistant principal Vacancy Interview List the name of one person who did not emerge from the Vacancy Screening. Similarly, the Area Superintendents may add a name to the principal list. However, a written rationale for doing so must be provided.

Opinions about this option are quite mixed. Its availability disturbed a number of our informants, who felt that its very existence undercuts the stringent professionalism and fairness of the selection process. On the other side of the argument, a number were quite comfortable with it, thoroughly approving of the opportunity it provides to correct an equity imbalance or allow for consideration of "personality" factors which are not conveyed by the application form. According to central administrative staff, the option is almost never used, and then only for equity purposes. Nevertheless, school personnel are very aware of its existence, and tend to perceive it as a more important feature than its frequency of use may actually warrant.

As soon as the Interview List is compiled, a Vacancy Interview Panel is convened. Once again, the composition of the Panel is specified by policy. Principal's panels include: the Associate Superintendent for Personnel; the OCPEO director; the Associate Superintendent for Curriculum; at least one "layperson" (or parent) from the school; at least one faculty representative of the school in question; and the supervising Area Superintendent. Parents are usually chosen from the leadership of the school's parent committees and teachers are chosen by the faculty. The composition of Interview Panels for assistant principals is essentially the same, except the Area Superintendent substitutes for the Associate Superintendent of Curriculum and the supervising principal sits in place of the Area Superintendent.

The task of the Vacancy Interview Panel is to select the top three finalists (unranked) from the Interview List of four to six candidates. Prior to beginning the interviews, the Panel is instructed about their purpose, proper procedures for security and general guidelines for sound interviewing. In addition, Panelists are provided the candidates' resumes. (The application form and the sum-of-the-ratings scores are not provided to the panel). Panelists are also provided with a checklist of interview questions and items (made up by Personnel), particularly "items which explore the special criteria for the job." The Panel may choose to add additional questions and items to explore; however, once the checklist is finalized, it is applied to all interviewees. In addition, the OCPEO office provides a statement of the current district-wide level of utilization and availability of minorities and women for the particular job category under consideration. Finally, the candidates may be required to write a short, extemporaneous essay on a job-related question just prior to the interview, and the Panel will have these responses.

After a 30-minute interview, the Panelists independently rate each candidate, using the form shown in Exhibit A-4 (Appendix A). Each Panelist signs the form for monitoring purposes. After all candidates have been interviewed and rated, the Panel discusses the interviews and the ratings. Taking these data and the data on utilization and availability of women and minorities into account, the Panel seeks "to reach consensus on three candidates who it feels are highly qualified for the vacancy and recommend the same to the Associate Superintendent for Personnel." These final three candidates are not ranked. If the Panel cannot come to consensus, as many as six finalists can be submitted by majority vote on each of the six.

Once these data are in, the Associate Superintendent for Personnel asks the supervisor of the position to comment on the finalists (and the interview process if he wishes) and recommend his choice for the position. He then takes the list of finalists, the Panelists' signed evaluation sheets for each candidate, the comments and recommendations of the supervisor, and his own comments and recommendations to Superintendent McFatter.

This is McFatter's first entry into the selection process, and his task is to review the credentials of the candidates, the comments and recommendations of the Interview Panel, and the recommendations of the supervisor and Personnel. McFatter views his oversight and monitoring role at this stage as crucial and deeply consequential for the credibility of the entire selection process. In keeping with his strong commitment to decentralization, he has delegated the operational responsibility for the selection process to Stephenson, and much of the authority for the final employment decision to the position's immediate superordinate (i.e., area superintendent or principal). As he said, "I don't consider myself expert in selecting personnel. I leave that to the experts--my staff and this [selection] system."

However, McFatter feels very intensely that "credibility [for the process] resides with the superintendent, not with the staff," and that "credibility is the most important thing you have to maintain with regard to this [process]--you might as well chuck the whole thing if you lose credibility. If the perception ever gets out that it's a Good Old Person process, it's all over--you may as well get another superintendent."

To ensure the integrity and credibility of the process, McFatter has adopted several strategies. First, he never gets involved until the final moment, preferring "to stay as far removed as I can in order to avoid any impression of entering into and manipulating the process." Nonetheless, he makes certain that his staff know that he will hold them accountable and that the consequences will be swift and severe if he ever finds deliberate manipulation or collusion. McFatter considers that such behavior "would be the greatest imaginable violation of trust between a superintendent and his staff and violation of his office of superintendent."

Second, McFatter carefully and closely reviews each appointment process from the Vacancy Interview onward. His review includes examining interviewer rating patterns, reviewing candidate qualifications, and discussing the pros and cons of the final employment recommendation in some detail with the supervising area superintendent (and principal) to ascertain that the reasons for appointment are sound. (If he does not know the recommended candidate, McFatter may at this point "sit and chat with and meet him just to get to know him." However, he does not "interview" the three finalists.)

Third, should he have any reason to suspect that there has been any sort of irregularity or collusion in an appointment process (even on an unconscious level), McFatter moves immediately to challenge and correct it. For instance, it was an ambiguous pattern in the interviewers' ratings for one vacancy that led to the requirement that each interviewer sign his rating sheets. This now allows McFatter to call individual staff members and question their rating patterns should the need arise, which he has done on more than one occasion. Staff are well aware of this possibility. As one informant said, "Signing that rating sheet made [good citizens] of all of us!" Similarly, a possible abuse of the option to add names to the Interview List appeared to have occurred on a few occasions; thus, the option was "tightened up" to limit both the distribution of the authority and the reasons for which it could be done.

In sum, Superintendent McFatter feels that "my role is to monitor ceaselessly and to be constantly alert to ensure that the process is applied fairly and its credibility maintained." He feels that no system of selection is infallible. As he commented, "Nothing is perfect--they found a chink earlier and they'll probably find one again!" Hence, the price of professionalism is a constant search for objectivity, fairness, and effective strategies for improvement.

Once McFatter has completed his review and is satisfied that all is in order and the best employment choice has been made, he carries the appointment recommendation to the board. He does have the authority to recommend an applicant not recommended as a finalist by the Interview Panel, if such a recommendation is accompanied by a written rationale. However, he has never done so. And, in the great majority of cases, the appointee is the person who was recommended by the immediate supervisor.

The board itself has very limited authority over personnel appointments under Florida law. While they can and have been quite influential in establishing recruitment and promotion policy, they can only refuse to appoint the Superintendent's recommended choice for "just cause." In practice, this is very difficult to do. Hence, the board is not deeply involved in school administrator selection. Once McFatter is satisfied that an appropriate recommendation has been reached, the selection process is essentially complete.

Historical Context

Broward County's principal selection process has grown out of six years of hard and persistent struggle to "find a better way." While the current process has been developed under Superintendent McFatter's administration (which began in 1979), it has solid foundations in the various attempts at improvement tried in the five years previous to this, and parts of it (for instance, the elementary intern program) have been in place for more than 10 years.

The basic drive to improve personnel selection in Broward appears to have been motivated by several factors: (1) two successive school boards of the middle and late 1970s that were strongly "pro-affirmative action" and pressed constantly for personnel policy improvements; (2) key individuals who provided leadership at critical points; and (3) the general context of growth, activism and professionalism of the community at large.

Any attempt at explaining contextual factors must begin with a brief sketch of the latter. Broward County lies in the center of Florida's

Gold Coast, between Palm Beach and Dade Counties. It is the fastest growing county in the nation, and its beauty and prosperity attract a variety of people from all over the country. Because two-thirds of the county's land area is set aside as a natural environment, most of Broward's million-plus population is concentrated in a corridor in the eastern part of the county, 27 miles long and six to 12 miles wide.

Since Florida statute designates school systems by county lines, the Broward County school district encompasses all of the county's 29 municipalities and covers a land area about the size of Delaware. The largest municipality is Fort Lauderdale, which is about 25 miles north of Miami. The size, attractiveness and demographic make-up of the municipalities are extraordinarily varied, ranging from the very wealthy, urbanized resort and retirement communities along the coast; to the older, less prosperous, minority (black) inner-city communities of the central eastern strip; to the booming suburban communities of the west.

The growth of the entire Gold Coast and Broward County in particular during the last decade has been nothing short of phenomenal. A primary economic base of the area is and always has been tourism, and during the 1970s, many of the tourists came back to stay. Broward County's population grew an overwhelming 63.5 percent, with most of the growth occurring either in the seacoast strip or the suburban west. This of course meant an increase in the general prosperity and tax base of the region. However, as officials are quick to point out, the corresponding demand for basic public services--roads, water and sewer systems, government, social services--was almost overwhelming for what had essentially been a quiet (albeit populous) vacation and agricultural area. Hence, many argue that the tax base has never quite kept up with essential demands, and, while the general level of prosperity is high, service budgets are always lean and often strained.

The growth of the school system has not been proportional to the growth of the general community and region. At the opening of the decade, Broward schools served about 116,000 students. By the mid-1970s the district had grown to 132,000. Since then, there has been some enrollment decline due in part to birth rate declines and in part to the growth of private schools. Current enrollment is 127,000, served by 97 elementary schools, 28 middle schools, 22 high schools, and 14 special centers. Most educators we spoke with anticipated stabilization at the current student population, or some very slight declines over the next decade.

The population growth has brought to Broward County an influx of energetic, interested, civically involved and demanding people, who are keenly interested in the educational system. This has helped to accelerate the press toward school improvement and system modernization. As several informants spontaneously said: "We got tired of all these people coming down here and criticizing our schools, so we decided to do something about it." "We had so many people coming in from such good systems all over the country we really couldn't afford to be second best." "Schools down here weren't regarded as too good, so if we wanted to keep all these people coming in, we had to improve things." The district has apparently been highly successful in its drive to improve, for student test scores have been increasing annually since 1975, and it is now the largest fully accredited school system in the nation.

Since 1970, the district has been under court order to "establish a unitary school system." The specific terms of the order are complex, and do permit one-race and predominantly one-race schools in certain specific situations (e.g., where transportation difficulties are extraordinary or where a minority community's desire to preserve historically beloved schools was especially strong). Further, the court did not establish a compliance standard based on a particular level of racial balance, but rather established the standard of maintaining a unitary school system. The court also addressed the issue of minority faculty and administrative appointments, directing that the former be distributed proportionally throughout the system and that special efforts be made to recruit, hire and promote minority administrators.

By the mid-1970s, the court had declared the district in compliance with the unitary system standard and tabled the case. The district was essentially left on its own to continue compliance.

In practice, it has proven far easier to do this for administrators and faculty than for students. While the overall district minority population has remained stable at around 23 percent black and 4 percent hispanic, populations shifts within the district have been rapid and extreme as the area has boomed. Hence, it has proven very difficult to maintain stable school boundaries in keeping with the mandate for a unitary system. In contrast, the district has forged ahead with equity in personnel appointments and has, in fact, voluntarily extended this drive to include women.

Much of the credit for establishing the initial momentum in the personnel area goes to the two "reform boards" of the middle and late 1970s, which were mentioned frequently in almost everyone's version of Broward's history of principal selection. The general consensus of our informants (whether they approved or not) was that these boards led the way in reforming what had traditionally been a highly political, "good old boy" appointment system. This is not to say that all of the school administrator appointments made prior to the reforms were bad. Clearly, they were not, for many appointed as principals under this process are today working effectively at various levels in the system. Nonetheless, the general concensus is that the earlier appointment process was not "professionalized"; that is, career ladders and criteria were neither clear nor consistent; selection procedures were very loose and subjective; women and blacks were significantly excluded; the best qualified in terms of credentials and experience were not always selected; and many well qualified people were discouraged and demoralized. As one of our informants characterized the old days, "It was who you went fishing with."

The drive to change this began in 1974 when the school board promulgated a policy that a promotion list of not more than 25 candidates (all levels combined) be established. Nothing was done to establish such a list until the current Associate Superintendent for Personnel, Dr. Stephenson, took office in 1975. Shortly after taking over, Stephenson was challenged by the board: "Where is the list." When he discovered that there was indeed such a policy, he immediately started developing a list. At this early stage, the list was constructed by a diversified interview committee, which interviewed candidates and then rated and chose the eligible ones. This first list of 25 had been in effect for about a year when the board took the cap off the maximum number allowed.

In response, in the fall of 1977, Personnel re-interviewed all applicants (around 500) and came up with a list of 435 eligible candidates, who were then interviewed for vacancies as openings occurred and they applied. The interview was done by a diversified committee quite similar to the current Vacancy Screening Committee and Vacancy Interview Panel. In addition, candidates filled out a lengthy application similar to the current one. Criteria were also similar, and references were also collected from supervisors. The interview itself was structured, and a five-point rating scale was used, with 3.5 being the "passing" score. However, since the cap was off, the interview committee tried not to exclude applicants unless absolutely necessary, and the standards underlying the 3.5 cutoff were not particularly rigorous.

At the same time as these developments in the selection process were occurring, the Board established the Office of Comprehensive Planning for Equal Opportunity (OCPEO), hiring Mr. Hayward Benson to create and implement an affirmative action program. When Benson took office in 1975, he changed the old "product-oriented" plan (which had grown out of the desegregation court case) to a "process-oriented" plan.

Benson's changes included the design and implementation of very sophisticated and comprehensive data bases on both district-wide and individual school utilization of women and minorities, and equally sophisticated and comprehensive empirical assessments of the availability of candidates in these categories. Combining the utilization and availability data, Benson was able to generate a School Profile for each principalship or assistant principalship vacancy. The Profile listed in order of priority, given district and school equity needs, the category that, "all else being equal," should be hired. If an administrator wished to appoint a category other than the one indicated on the Profile, he had to make a written request for a waiver. In other words, the Profile clearly specified the race and sex to be appointed in filling each particular vacancy.

This extraordinarily strong affirmative action process was fully supported by the board and was tightly overlaid onto the principal selection process. The "Profiling," as it came to be known, operated in full swing for two or three years, and succeeded in greatly increasing the number of women and minority administrators. (Presently, Broward has almost no underutilization of these groups in any school administrator category.) At the same time, however, the system eventually led to considerable uproar and resistance from two groups: (1) white male candidates, who "felt they didn't have a chance" and became quite demoralized (even to the point of not bothering to apply); and (2) line administrators, who felt that their legally constituted authority to hire staff had been seriously subverted. Interestingly, most of our informants--regardless of race or sex--agreed that these had become real and significant problems to at least some extent during what has come to be remembered as "our catch-up period."

Hence, after about three years of operation, both the principal selection process and the approach to affirmative action--particularly the latter--were under serious challenge on many fronts. The selection process was considered by many to be too time-consuming and unwieldy, and the very large list did not have credibility. As one informant said, "Mediocrity had crept in and there were people on that list who didn't stand a ghost of a chance of promotion." Further, specific appointments were constantly being challenged and questioned by disappointed candidates (of all groups), line administrators, and even board members. As one central staff member commented, "We spent half our time going over the records with people who had challenged an appointment." By the 1978-79 school year, the situation had reached the boiling point, with turmoil and controversy the order of the day. For instance, according to one informant, about 50 percent of the appointments during this period were contested.

At this same moment, the search began for a new superintendent--the third since 1973. After a national search which drew 200 applicants, Dr. McFatter was selected. McFatter at the time had been in the district for about 18 years as Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Associate Superintendent for Instruction, and previously had served as Superintendent in a small West Florida district. McFatter was the only local applicant to make the five finalists. He recalls that in his board interview he took a strong position that "the personnel system needs to be fixed so that it's credible and fair to all groups," as well as respectful of legally constituted administrative authority to hire.

Almost as soon as McFatter took office, he was confronted with crises over several principal appointments, which, while ultimately resolved, highlighted the problems in both the selection and affirmative action systems. In response, he voided the list of 435 and directed that a new list no larger than the number of vacancies projected for the next 18 months be devised. At the same time, he directed that a review and redesign of the selection and affirmative action systems be undertaken. To assist with this, McFatter called in the Desegregation Center at the School of Education at the University of Miami, which consults nationally on equity issues.

The results of these efforts are the current systems of selection and affirmative action, which were adopted as board policy in August, 1980. While major changes were made, both systems are essentially similar in many respects to the earlier models. However, they are both substantially improved at the points of dispute. For instance, the "Profiling" has been eliminated. In its place, the Vacancy Interview Panel and the appointing supervisor now receive detailed, district-wide data on utilization and availability. Further, the Desegregation Center has been brought in as an external monitor. Similarly, the selection process has been streamlined and tightened to include more efficient forms (shown in Appendix A); new, more stringent criteria; objective evaluation standards; and standardized questioning of candidates. (A few additional and very minor modifications in selection policy were made in January, 1982.[3])

---

[3] Chief among these was the elimination of parents and teachers from the Vacancy Screening Committee. These constituencies were dropped because of logistical problems. The screening is very time-consuming (often requiring several days), and it proved very difficult to arrange Committee schedules that included teachers and parents, particularly parents. This often led to substantial delays in the entire process. (Parents and teachers are still important members of Vacancy Interview Panels.)

Since its adoption in 1980, the present system has been well received. Though minorities and women tend to watch it somewhat guardedly, there has been no cause for complaint thus far. Equity in appointments has not retrogressed. Though not hesitant to offer criticisms, informants of all groups characterized the system as "very fair to everyone." A number mentioned with some pride that there have been virtually no complaints or challenges to appointments in the past two years, a marked contrast to the previous period.

In sum, Broward County has arrived at its present system of principal selection after considerable struggle and testing of options. It has confronted and "solved" both educational quality and equity issues and now has a selection system that enhances both.

Participants' Perceptions of the Process

While in Broward County, we spoke with a variety of participants in and observers of the process. These included assistants who were seeking appointments and principals who had recently secured positions under this system, as well as those who had come up through earlier processes. And we also spoke with long-time central administrators as well as those fairly new to the system.

All of our informants had both positive and critical comments to offer about the process and were unhesitatingly candid in both respects. As one said, "Nothing is perfect, no matter how good it is. There are always weak spots, and you just have to keep working at it."

When asked to identify the most positive features of the process, every respondent stressed its "objectivity," pointing out that "it minimizes the game playing" and "it minimizes good old boyism." In other words, the system is unanimously perceived as highly professional, very fair, and a great improvement over former approaches. Many also commented that the process has encouraged people to apply and actively work for the principalship by building specific skills and experiences. One respondent reflected the general perception very neatly: "It heightens the awareness of administrators that there are folks who can meet the qualifications if you just make the commitment to find them. This system enhances objectivity. It's sequential--it follows logical concepts. It's universal in application, and it's easy to do."

On the negative side, some felt that the efforts to counter the problems of "game playing" and "good old boyism" had perhaps "gone overboard," and that the checks and balances of the process had become so complex as to be cumbersome. For instance, several commented that many principals actively dislike the forced-choice aspect of the recommendation form. Others pointed out that the Vacancy Screening is time-consuming for raters. (In contrast, a few raters expressed concerns that the screening was perhaps not rigorous enough, since they could not directly check on the "truthfulness" of the candidates' applications.[4])

From the perspective of the candidates themselves--both those still striving and those who had attained their goal--two criticisms stood out. First, many (but not all) consider the application form to be burdensome, particularly since it must be updated and rescreened annually. It is a major effort to fill out. However, as one rater commented, "My positive feeling was that you could spot those [good] people from those materials; it seemed we could separate the people who were good from those who were not good."

The far more important criticism from the applicants is that the process does not provide for good feedback and development. It is of special concern to almost everyone that unless called for an interview, "You never see anybody--it's not face-to-face." Universally, those who had gone through the process express a need for much more feedback--whether positive or negative--and many more opportunities for training and strengthening identified weakness. For instance, several mentioned the benefits of an internship and expressed concern that the old elementary internship had eroded. (The PAT program was not widely known of at the time of our visit.)

---

[4] There are a number of "truthfulness" checks and balances in place in the process, including opportunities for Personnel to verify applicants' statements. Individual committee members do not personally participate in such checking, however, and may not be fully aware of these opportunities.

The Future

Broward is moving rapidly to address the two major concerns of the aspirants, with which the administration concurs. The PAT program, which has already been described, will begin next fall to address training and development needs.

The district is adopting a new (to education) method to address the need for "face-to-face" contact at the vacancy screening stage. Under the leadership of Ms. Sweeney, key staff are working to implement "Targeted Selection" at this initial step. Originated by Development Dimensions Incorporated of Pittsburgh, Targeted Selection is a behaviorally oriented, structured interviewing technique that is based on detailed Job Analysis (also a formal technique) of the position in question. Targeted selection interviewers closely and intensively interview the candidate in specific, criterion-referenced terms and arrive at a rating. The candidate has both the personal contact desired and almost immediate feedback from the interview.[5]

Current plans call for Targeted Selection to supplement the present Vacancy Screening Process, thereby providing additional data for the raters to use. If it lives up to its early promise, Targeted Selection may eventually replace the application form and/or the Vacancy Screening itself. However, such a change will not be undertaken without careful scrutiny and comparative testing.

---

[5] Targeted Selection was implemented on a pilot basis in June, 1982, and used to screen 74 applicants for the PAT program openings. According to Ms. Sweeney, the response of both school-based and district managers to Targeted Selection has been positive. This approach is also currently being extended beyond the school-based administrator roles. At the time of our final report preparation, the Targeted Selection technique was being used to conduct Function-Task Analysis and Job Analysis of all managerial positions in Broward County.

Also under consideration and testing as a combination selection/development tool is an assessment center. This, however, is still in the exploration stage, with planning slated to begin in the 1982-83 school year. And, while there is a great deal of interest, the district is not yet quite sure just how a center might fit into the flow of the selection process, or which particular type of center would best suit local needs. Such questions are reserved for the planning year.

In sum, Broward's plans for the immediate future call for substantially strengthening an already powerful principal selection process. If the district is successful, it will have a fully integrated selection/training process, wherein the identification and weeding of applicants is tied at every step to specific training and staff development opportunities. As one informant said, "The way we're headed now--Targeted Selection, the Management Academy [which includes PAT], an Assessment Center [perhaps]--will be a really top system."

Costs and Benefits

Broward's principal selection process has some costs to the system, and many benefits. The chief cost is the time required of staff who participate on the Vacancy Screening Committee and the Interview Panel, as well as of those whose responsibility it is to operate and monitor the system. Without question, the process is elaborate and complex, for it involves a significant number of carefully executed checks and balances. Further, as Superintendent McFatter pointed out, it requires constant vigilance and careful monitoring.

However, virtually all of our informants strongly felt that it was well worth the effort to achieve a professional selection process that is perceived as "fair to all groups." In a district such as Broward--with its early history of cronyism in appointments and more recent history of turmoil, instability, and upheaval--the professionalism and fairness that the current process brings to the selection of school administrators is well worth the cost in time and energy.

For instance, staff morale is much improved, for the routes to promotion are now clearly set forth and there is a strong sense that "everyone has a chance," regardless of race or sex. Further, "good people" are encouraged to aspire to the principalship, and to qualify themselves by seeking the appropriate training and experiences. This in turn has a widespread leavening effect, for as the selection gates narrow the pools of principalship candidates, the district is still left with significant numbers of well trained and qualified staff to serve in other administrative roles. As one candidate commented, "It gets harder and harder all the time to be a principal here. You really have to qualify yourself, and we have so many good, well qualified assistant principals and deans now."

In addition, the participation of all groups--central administrators, principals, assistant principals, parents, teachers, minorities, women--as gatekeepers serves generally to reassure staff of the fairness and professionalism of the process. Even the most suspicious skeptics can "watch things" through their own or colleagues' participation on the Vacancy Screening Committees and Interview Panels. And, even more importantly, the participation of these various groups serves the purpose of submitting candidates to the close scrutiny of the various constitutencies they must face as school administrators.

Another significant benefit of the process is that it helps the district to specify with considerable precision the numbers of qualified principal candidates available to meet future needs. By comparing available staff with projections and estimates of expansions and retirements, particularly the latter, Broward is able to adjust the process quickly to meet future needs. For instance, projection of substantial likely retirements at the elementary level over the next five to ten years is one of the motivations for the PAT program's immediate implementation next fall.

In sum, Broward County has developed a tightly professional and rigorously checked and balanced principal selection process. While the system is complex and impersonal from the candidate's point of view, it is widely perceived to work well. The top administration is pleased with the caliber of the candidates and principals that the process produces. Candidates are challenged by the system to intensively qualify themselves. Principals chosen by the process have a vision of their role and why they were chosen. The various professional constituencies and equity interest groups have a strong sense of participation in the process and growing confidence in its fairness. And, last but not least, students appear to be receiving strong and effective educational leadership.

Chapter 3

Improved Practices in Hillsborough County, Florida

Introduction

Another district recommended to us by the Florida Council on Educational Management was Hillsborough County, Florida. Hillsborough's Superintendent, Dr. Raymond O. Shelton, welcomed our inquiry via Hillsborough's Assistant Superintendent for Administration and Operations, Paul Wharton. Under Dr. Shelton's auspices, Mr. Wharton hosted and coordinated our five-day visit in May 1982.

In this chapter, we first describe Hillsborough's principal selection process; second, the historical context in which that process has developed; third, perceptions of participants; and finally, the future and some costs and benefits of the process.

The Selection Process

Hillsborough County's principal selection process is characterized by three main features: (1) well defined, well known career ladders to the principalship, each of which includes universally available development opportunities and careful scrutiny of candidates by top district administrators; (2) rigorous screening at entry-level positions, conducted by a diversified team composed mainly of school-level staff; and (3) team interviewing of screened and approved applicants for specific vacancies by the seven top administrative leaders in the district. The process rests upon both the broad-based participation of teachers, principals and assistant principals, who essentially control the entry gates, and the intimate and pervasive involvement of the top district leaders, who control the final appointment decisions. It is a process that is characterized by a great deal of stability and trust among its participants. These critical elements have been built up in part by the consistency and fairness with which it has operated for ten years, and in part by the high esteem and respect its top leaders (who are its originators) have earned for their integrity and professionalism.

At the secondary level, the principalship career ladder has three steps: (1) dean; (2) assistant principal; (3) principal. As a general rule, candidates must pass through both the dean and assistant principal steps to become a principal. This is particularly the case for the senior high principalships. Since deanship is the basic entry-level position, the minimal criteria for each of the other two positions are essentially the same as those for this role. Deanship candidates are required to have a minimum of three years' successful teaching experience, a master's degree, and certification in secondary administration and supervision.

While serving in the deanship, the aspirant learns "discipline and student relations." In the assistant principal role, the candidate also serves in a functionally specified role or roles. For instance, all Hillsborough high schools have an assistant principal for curriculum and an assistant principal for administration (as well as other assistant principalships, depending on the size of the school). The supervising principals are encouraged to rotate their assistants so that each can gain experience with curriculum and administration as well as any other functions. If the supervising principal chooses not to rotate assistants (as some may), the assistants themselves generally seek to exchange information about their respective duties.

At the elementary level, the basic criteria are similar. Candidates for the principalship must have a minimum of three years' successful teaching experience, a master's degree, and certification in elementary administration and supervision. The chief difference between the two levels is that there are no administrative steps in the career ladder to the elementary principalship. The principalship is itself the entry administrative position.

However, in practice, the instructional position of curriculum specialist has become the prerequisite for the elementary principalship. Each elementary school in the district has a curriculum specialist whose role it is to provide curriculum leadership for the entire school. The curriculum specialist's duties cut across all grade levels and include: assisting teachers with student diagnostic testing and placement; working with teachers to evaluate students and prescribe instruction; conducting classroom demonstrations of teaching methods and materials; assisting teachers in grouping students and writing lesson plans; monitoring the entire curriculum for the school; securing materials; assisting with scheduling; coordinating special instructional programs; working with teachers and administrators to develop the school's inservice program; assisting staff in developing the school's annual goals and objectives; and serving as liaison between the school and various groups (such as parent volunteer workers, aides, and interns).

In addition, if the supervising principal desires, the curriculum specialist may serve as something of a de facto assistant principal. (Hillsborough County elementary schools do not have assistant principals.) In this role, the specialist is placed in charge of the school in the principal's absence for meetings, and is also given an opportunity to learn various administrative tasks and duties. Not all principals use their curriculum specialists this way; thus, unlike the secondary deans and assistant principals, the curriculum specialists cannot be guaranteed of receiving administrative training.

In terms of the district's philosophy, this is not a lack in the specialist's developmental experience. Hillsborough County places heavy emphasis on curriculum, particularly at the elementary level. The elementary principal is expected to be a curriculum leader, and, while she may rely on her curriculum specialist for day-to-day curriculum supervision, ideally she herself is deeply knowledgeable and up-to-date in elementary curriculum and instruction. As one top administrator said, "The concept of the principal [both elementary and secondary] has changed in this district so that they are now the leaders in curriculum. The principal is not appointed just because of his administrative and organizational leadership." Similarly, other top district administrators emphasized that curriculum skills and background are as important as organizational and administrative ability. The curriculum specialist position provides an opportunity for candidates to develop in both areas through the school-wide (and often district-wide) leadership demands of the role.

The entry positions of curriculum specialist, dean and assistant principal are all obtained through a two-stage process, by applying first to a screening committee and then directly to the supervising principal. As soon as an aspirant has completed the basic requirements, she files an application with Personnel to begin this process. The application is simple, requiring a listing of teaching and educational experience and three references. An open-ended opportunity is provided for the applicant to include other information, such as honors. The main purpose of the application is to register the candidate's interest and to declare that the basic certifications and training have been completed. Personnel reviews the application to verify that criteria are indeed met and compiles a list of eligible candidates for screening.

Applications may be filed at any time, and, as soon as a dozen or so eligible aspirants accumulate (or at least twice a year, in the spring and fall), the Assistant Superintendent for Administration and Operations convenes a Screening Committee. The Screening Committee is the gatekeeper for the principalship. It controls access to the early positions (and at the elementary level, to the principalship itself). It is regarded as a stiff hurdle for the candidates, who approach it with respect.

The make-up of the Committee is spelled out in district policy. Each Committee includes representatives of positions subordinate and superordinate to the slot being filled, as well as peer representatives. For instance, the dean's Screening Committee includes: two teachers; two members of the Dean's Council (representing both sexes); a representative from the Junior and Senior High Principals' Councils; and the Assistant Superintendent for Administration and Operations or his representative, who chairs the Committee. Similarly, the senior high assistant principal's Screening Committee includes: two teachers; one assistant principal; two representatives from the Senior High Principals' Council; and from the Central Office, the General Director of Secondary Education and the Assistant Superintendent for Administration or his representative. (Normally, there is no screening for the secondary assistant principalship. Rather, assistants are promoted from the pool of deans. Nevertheless, district policy makes provision for the composition of assistant principalship screening committees in the rare case where circumstances might require convening such a committee.)

There is ordinarily no screening for secondary principalship, since appointments are made from the ranks of tested administrators, that is, the assistants. However, when needed--for instance, in the case of an outside candidate--a committee similar to that for elementary principals is formed. The elementary principal's Screening Committee is made up of two teachers; the appropriate General Area Director (that is, the Director with jurisdiction over that vacancy); the General Director of Elementary Education; two elementary principals; one secondary principal (usually from a junior high school); and the Assistant Superintendent for Administration and Operations or his representative. The Screening Committee for the elementary curriculum specialist is quite similar to that for the elementary principal. The number of principals, however, is reduced and curriculum specialists are added in their place.

It is generally regarded as an honor to be selected to serve on a Screening Committee. Selections are made at the recommendation of the supervising principal in the case of teachers and at the recommendations of the appropriate Principals' Council, General Director, and/or General Area Director in the case of principals and curriculum specialists. A request is made from Assistant Superintendent Wharton's office to these groups to "give us your best." Race and sex are also taken into account, and effort is made to distribute Committee membership so that it does not fall to the same people repeatedly. However, participation on the Committee is not rotated, and, as intended, membership is perceived by participants as a recognition of achievement.

The Screening Committee interviews each applicant for about thirty minutes. Committee members then individually rate the applicant. There is no discussion of applicants until all ratings are completed, and thus discussion has no effect on the ratings. The rating form is straightforward (see Exhibit 3-1), and is the ratings given are based upon the Screening Committee's questioning. The Committee formulates its own questions, usually one or two per member, and generally asks the same questions of each candidate. However, this is not a requirement, and questions are often tailored to fit the candidate's specific background or response to earlier questions.

In instructing the Committee, Assistant Superintendent Wharton (or one of his representatives), seeks to elicit the deepest role identification of each member. Pete Davidson, General Area Director and Wharton's frequent representative on Screening Committees, described instructions he had recently given at a screening for dean: "I told them, 'Teachers, you will be sending unruly students to this person; Deans, this person will be in the cohort working with you, down the hall and on the Deans' Council; Principals, consider this person as your dean at your school. Do you want him there?'"

This instruction, together with the perception that one has been honored by being asked to serve on the Committee, succeeds in drawing appropriate and demanding interview questions from the Committee members. Our respondents (most of whom had gone through the process) almost universally echoed the sentiments of one, who said: "It's like being on the firing line. Especially the first time [e.g., dean and curriculum specialist screenings]. The questions come very fast and you're expected to react quickly with excellent judgment." The specific content of the questions may vary depending upon what issues or situations are uppermost in the minds of the interviewers. For instance, more than one principal we spoke with related using situational questions that directly reflected current problems at their schools. As one said, "I sat on two Committees and asked questions [about issues] that were causing problems here and got solutions! Several candidates had some excellent ideas I hadn't thought of." This "reality approach" to questioning was confirmed from the interviewees' perspective, as our informants recalled being asked very detailed and specific "What would you do if . . ." questions. Our informants also noted somewhat ruefully that the questions were almost always "the kind that could have more than one answer!"

Exhibit 3-1

A GUIDE FOR RATING--AND SELECTING--ADMINISTRATORS
(Hillsborough County, Florida)

Name________________________________ Date__________________

Rate the items from 5 to 1, 5 being the highest rating.

1. Personal appearance

Do you feel the general appearance of the candidate is compatible with the position sought? Would the general appearance bring respect and confidence? Does the candidate give the appearance of an educational leader? 5 4 3 2 1

2. Verbal expression

Does the manner of speech motivate confidence? Does the candidate speak with authority? Does the candidate express his ideas clearly? 5 4 3 2 1

3. Judgment

In response to questions, does he demonstrate good judgment? Does he show evidence of diplomacy? 5 4 3 2 1

4. Attitude toward position

How does he view the principal's task? His responsibility to the district? Toward his faculty? Toward parents? Toward pupils? 5 4 3 2 1

5. Intelligence.

How would you judge the general intelligence of the candidate? Does he appear keen or average as he responds to questions? 5 4 3 2 1

6. Attitude of self

How does the candidate view himself? Does he give the impression of being confident? 5 4 3 2 1

7. Professional efficiency

Does the candidate appear to understand educational problems? Does he have good ideas as to how they should be handled? What are his ideas of the objectives of education? Does he have practical ideas on how they may be reached by all pupils? 5 4 3 2 1

8. Expertise in field

Does the candidate appear cognizant of recent trends in school administration? Does he seem to have a complete grasp of the field? 5 4 3 2 1

TOTAL RATING ______________

Immediately following the interview, each candidate is asked to write a short essay in response to a standard question. The topic is usually, "Describe (anonymously) the best administrator you have ever known and the reasons you feel the person [was] outstanding" or "Why would you like to become [the position being filled]?" These essays do not affect the rating. However, they may be of importance later to the principalship interview team of top district administrators.

The ratings for each candidate are assigned according to the rating sheet (Exhibit 3-1), which has a five-point scale in each of eight categories. The highest and lowest scores for each candidate are discarded, and the remaining scores are averaged. Thirty is the passing score, which means that the applicant must receive at least a four on most items to pass. As Davidson put it in his recent instruction to the deanship Committee, "Three is considered average. We don't want average administrators here." Approximately 35-40 percent of the candidates for the first-level positions (deans and curriculum specialists) fail the screening. Fewer fail second-level screenings (e.g., for elementary principals), but even here there are failures.

Following the screening, applicants can go to Personnel and review their rating sheets, which are anonymous. Candidates can also seek counseling from Personnel or from other top administrators. If a candidate fails, he may be rescreened after a one-year waiting period. If a successful candidate fails to secure an appointment within three years of screening, he must be rescreened in order to remain to be eligible for the position category. As several of our informants noted, the purpose of the rescreening requirement is to insure that aspiring administrators "stay current."

Once a candidate has passed the screening for curriculum specialist or dean, she must compete with other successful candidates for a position. This competition is under the direct control of the supervising principal. Openings are advertised by specific schools in the weekly Administrative Bulletin. Vacancies are not advertised in the media, nor are special efforts made to recruit particular groups such as minorities and women.

Hillsborough's practice is to promote from within the district. Because of its size (115,000 students) and the fact that, as the growing center of Florida's West Coast, it attracts a diverse population, the administration is comfortable with the practice of promoting from within. And, though Hillsborough is under court order for desegregation, equity in appointments has become a norm rather than an issue. Blacks, who make up about 20 percent of the student population, are well represented in the ranks of elementary and junior high school principals (and among curriculum specialists and deans). It is a matter of some concern to the administration that, due to a recent promotion to central administrative ranks, there is currently no black high school principal. However, there are a number of black deans and assistants. Over half of Hillsborough County's elementary principals are women, a fact due no doubt to a principalship career ladder that places heavy emphasis on classroom and curriculum experience. The proportion of women declines substantially at secondary levels; about 10 percent of junior and senior high levels are women. However, women are well represented in the ranks of deans and assistant principals.

When a position below the level of principal is advertised in the Bulletin, it is the candidates's responsibility to apply directly to the supervising principal. The supervising principal may also ask Personnel for the highest scorers on the screening list and seek to recruit them. As one ex-candidate, now a principal, put it: "Once you screen, you have to get out there and hustle if you want one of these jobs."

The principal generally interviews several candidates for an opening. Some principals set up school-level interview teams of faculty and other administrators to mimic the Screening Interview. Others choose to conduct one-on-one interviews with the candidates. At the secondary level, it has become the norm for the principals to select a dean or assistant from outside the school. As one commented: "This brings in new blood, and it keeps your other deans from fighting!" The same norm generally operates at the elementary level also, although the issue arises less often here since there is only one curriculum specialist per school.

The supervising principal has a great deal of authority over the appointment decision. However, her autonomy is not complete, for the selection must be approved, first by Assistant Superintendent Wharton and, ultimately, by Superintendent Shelton. While these leaders--particularly Wharton--scrutinize these recommendations very carefully, in most cases the supervising principals themselves appear to have internalized the Hillsborough County criteria for educational leaders, and seem to take pride in their ability to spot, groom, screen, and ultimately recommend candidates for appointment to these entry-level positions. As one said: "These are our future principals, and we look at them pretty carefully."

Once in an entry role, the aspirant undergoes a development and weeding process of several years' duration. Curriculum specialists usually spend five to six years in the role, and deans and assistant principals may spend even longer periods of time in these slots. In all of these roles, aspirants can avail themselves of numerous inservice experiences, including seminars, workshops, visitations, and demonstrations. As one elementary principal lightly said: "Once you get to be a curriculum specialist, they inservice you to death on everything!" And then, describing the career path in a more serious vein: "It's just so sequential. Everything is right there before you. The training is right there if you want it."

The aspirants also have endless opportunities to serve on the committees, task forces, and councils that are central to the goverance of the district. While Hillsborough is a highly centralized system, it is not autocratically so. The central leadership is constantly soliciting planning participation and feedback from school-level staff, both formally through the committee mechanisms and informally through the constant presence of the top leadership in the schools. For instance, our informants universally echoed the report of one principal who commented, "Usually someone from Instruction or Administration--Mr. Farmer [Assistant Superintendent for Instruction], Mr. Wharton, one of the Area Directors or one of the General Directors [of Elementary and Secondary Education]--drops by the school two or three times a week just to visit and see what's going on." By their own reports, the central staff use these visits not only to "see what's going on," but also to "get to know" the curriculum specialists, deans and assistant principals now in the pipeline. And, according to these groups, this scrutiny is very focused on the substance and effectiveness of their job performance. As one principal commented, "You're really being groomed while you're in this position. You're sought after for committees and things and they really watch you hard."

One of the chief virtues of this grooming process appears to be its clarity. Everyone knows what is expected of those who aspire to the principalship. Active candidates stretch to serve on committees and task forces, to devise curriculum innovations and improvements for their schools, and to come to the attention of the top leadership through their work. As one successful candidate put it, "I've heard a few people say it's who you know. Well in a sense it is, but it's who you know or get recognition from for what you do and for your merit. For instance, I got to know Mr. Worden [General Director of Elementary Education] by volunteering to serve on the Summer School Committee. I didn't know him before that, and I worked hard and made sure I did a very good job. Anybody could've done that."

By the time the candidate comes up to the line to compete for a specific principalship vacancy, he has usually been observed performing as a curriculum specialist, dean, or assistant principal for a number of years. While there is no specific length-of-service requirement in these positions, it is the rare candidate who does not serve at least two or three years at one step before competing for the next. Our informants uniformly indicated that while there were exceptions, given rare combinations of unusual opportunities to distinguish oneself and the timing of principalship openings, five to six years' tenure was generally the norm for each of the preparatory positions.

Vacant principalships are advertised by school in the Administrative Bulletin. Present principals are given the right of transfer, and the vacancy listed is not necessarily the one that will be available for the competition. For instance, seven vacancies for the 1982-83 school year (an unusual number) resulted in a total of 25 moves when all the transfers and promotions were completed. Again, however, the transfer policy is well known and publicized, for it is a standard part of each announcement. Hence, principal candidates are well aware of the possibility that when they apply for MacFarlane School, MacFarlane's position may have been filled by transfer and it may be a position at another school that is actually open. Candidates are urged in the announcement to "make your desire [for a particular position] known," and it is quite acceptable to ask for school X "if it should become vacant through transfer." While our informants were comfortable with expressing transfer preference for a particular school after securing their first principalship, they expressed more reticence at the candidate stage. Most echoed the sentiments of one who said, "While I would've liked to have gone to X school, I really felt I should go wherever I was placed. And still do. All of our schools are good, and all have their problems. While there may be lots of inconvenience in commuting depending on where you live, there's not really that much difference among the schools themselves."

Candidates apply for vacant positions in two ways: (1) by responding to the Bulletin advertisement; and (2) by being a member of the screened and approved candidate pool (presently about 35 candidates at the elementary level, and about 60 at the secondary level). The latter automatically confers applicant status, regardless of whether the candidate notifies her General Area Director of interest in a specific position or not. In fact, it is common practice for candidates who have not actually applied for a specific vacancy to be invited from the pool to appear before the Interview Committee.

Such invitations may be issued from several sources. First, Personnel reviews the list of screened and approved candidates in order to (1) add enough candidates to those who directly applied to make up an interview group of "about two to three per vacancy," and (2) insure that those candidates who might be particularly suited to the position by virtue of special skills, geographic location, etc., are called. New candidates also might be added by Assistant Superintendent Wharton's office, after he and his staff have reviewed the pool list. Finally, the Interview Committee itself might decide consensually to expand the candidate group being interviewed. As one member of this Committee commented: "We might look at two or three per vacancy, then decide to go the list and pull two or three more."

The Interview Committee plays a crucial role in principal appointments in Hillsborough County. It consists of the district's top decision-making team, and its fundamental role is to reach consensus about who should be principal at X school. Membership on the Committee extends to the Superintendent; the six Assistant Superintendents (for Business and Finance, Personnel, Supportive Services, Administration and Operations, Instruction, and Vocational, Technical, and Adult Education); the General Area Director with oversight of the vacancy; and the General Director of Elementary or Secondary Education, as appropriate. In practice, however, not all the Assistant Superintendents consistently attend. The core committee therefore tends to consist of about seven members, usually the following Superintendent Shelton; Assistant Superintendent for Administration and Operations Wharton; the Assistant Superintendents for Instruction, Personnel, and Supportive Services; the General Area Director with oversight for the vacancy; and the General Director for Elementary or Secondary Education, as appropriate.

Each candidate is called before the Interview Committee for an interview that generally lasts about 30 minutes, and is regarded as extremely important by both candidates and the Interview Committee. The structure is open-ended, and candidates who have been through the process characterize the questions as "What do you think about policy X or decision Y" questions, as compared to the "What would you do if" of questions that characterize the screening. Most of the candidates--particularly at the secondary level--are fairly well known to some if not most of the Interview Committee. For instance, the General Directors are usually well acquainted with all the candidates, and both Wharton and the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, Frank Farmer, often are. Nevertheless, opinions and choices are not set at this stage. As one member of the Committee commented, "You may have favorites [among the candidates you know] but you're basically happy with all of them. You may speak up for one particular person to more strongly present their good qualities, but you listen to what everybody else has to say too."

And, as several anecdotes illustrated, opinions can be changed by a candidate's interview performance.

The Interview Committee waits until all candidates have been interviewed before discussing any. No rating forms are used, although individual Committee members may make notes as they desire. Questioning is free-flowing, and each Committee member queries the candidate at will.

The Committee often meets two or three times to discuss and review issues and candidates. According to several members, the discussions tend to focus on candidate-school matches, based on both student and community needs and the candidate's instructional/administrative skills and personality/public relations skills. And, as one Committee member put it, "Everyone tends to stress their own special interest--Mr. Farmer emphasizes curriculum, Mr. Wharton emphasizes community [that is, the type of community served by the school and the particular educational needs of the children], Dr. Shelton emphasizes management, and so on."

The Interview Committee strives for consensus in its final recommendations, and usually attains it. In fact, our informants noted that a failure of consensus had never happened. If this should occur, Superintendent Shelton would, in his own words, "step in and take one side or the other."

In actuality, the authority for the decision always rests with Shelton. And, the authority to recommend an appointment to Shelton rests with Assistant Superintendent Wharton. However, the essential decision-making is done consensually by the top management team in Committee. As Wharton said, "I wouldn't write the letter [of recommendation to the Superintendent] unless everyone had agreed." And, as Shelton said, "In excess of 90 percent of the time I go with the first choice of the Committee. And if it's not the first choice, then it's the second choice."

Those candidates who are not chosen to fill a vacancy--whether called for an interview or not--can reapply as often as they wish. However, there is an informal limit on the number of times one may be called for an interview and fail to secure an appointment. The maximum number is perceived to be three by both Committee members and candidates. As one of the former said, "We may see an individual three times--by then, well, if they haven't been appointed we will not reconsider them. But many people do seem to improve with time and more experience and lots of times there just aren't enough openings to go around for so many good people, so it's not unusual to call a candidate back once or twice." Similarly, one principal expressed the perceptions of current and former candidates with the comment, "If you get called down there three times and they don't appoint you, it's the kiss of death."

Once the final decision is made, Superintendent Shelton carries it to the Board. This amounts to a formality, for like all Florida School Boards, Hillsborough County's is limited in its ability to interfere with personnel appointments. The Board can only refuse a recommendation for cause. Further, while a Board may challenge an administration to show that cause does not exist or question whether or not a particular appointment meets quality or affirmative action requirements, the relationship between the Hillsborough County Board and its superintendent is so good that this never happens. Thus, once the Committee consensually arrives at a recommendation and Shelton carries it to the Board, Hillsborough's principal selection process is complete.

Historical Context

Hillsborough County's current principal selection process has grown up out of three contextual factors: (1) the disintegration, turmoil, and scandal that characterized the district in the 1960s; (2) the general desire for reform of this situation and the strong corrective leadership of key figures who are still part of the district's top management; and (3) the general stability of both the community at large and the school system.

As a community, Hillsborough County is part of the Tampa-St. Petersburg area, which is the center and hub of Florida's West Coast. This area's population grew between 1970 and 1980 by 42 percent to over 1.5

million people, and Hillsborough County itself grew by about one-third to a population of nearly 650,000. In spite of this growth, Hillsborough, with its three municipalities (the largest of which is Tampa), still retains much of the character of earlier, more rural times. The county (and the school district) covers 1,000 square miles, and much of the land is set aside for agriculture. Even the city of Tampa, an industrial center that is currently experiencing major renewal and construction, is comfortably spread out and does not "feel" like a city of almost a quarter of a million inhabitants.

Hillsborough County overall has about 13 percent black and about 10 percent hispanic residents, most of whom live in the city of Tampa (which is 24 percent black and 13 percent hispanic). The school district came under court order for biracial, black/white desegregation in the early 1970s. Since the district's prompt and peaceful compliance, the court has continued to monitor the plan by receiving periodic reports. However, racial equity no longer seems to be a major issue in Hillsborough County schools. Rather, equity--particularly in school adminstrator appointments--has more or less become and remained the norm, and has in fact taken a back seat to "quality" in appointments. As one central administrator said, "In the beginning [of desegregation] we felt it was necessary to have at least one black administrator in every secondary school and we tried to do that. There was never anything in writing about it--we just felt we should do it. Now we just let the chips fall where they may. You recommend the best person you can find for the job. The pools [of candidates] have enough minorities and women so that it pretty well takes care of itself."

Hispanic desegregation has apparently never emerged as an issue on any level. The main hispanic community, Ybor City in downtown Tampa, has been established since 1885 and is an integral part of the area.

The Hillsborough County school district has reflected (but not fuly kept pace with) the general population growth, and shown a small but steady increase of a few hundred students per year. Its present enrollment of 112,000 makes it the 15th largest district in the nation and third largest in Florida. Its 124 schools include 87 elementary schools, 25 junior high and middle schools, 11 senior highs, and 2 special centers. The district's hispanic student population constitutes a substantially lower portion of the total than for the community at large, while its black student population constitutes a substantially larger portion. Specifically, hispanics are about 4 percent of the enrollment; blacks about 20 percent.

In spite of its growth, Hillsborough County is not a wealthy school district. Due to special state laws aimed at preserving agricultural land from development, much of the county is virtually exempt from taxation. Hence, the district cannot realize much advantage from an expanded tax base for the discretionary millage levies (above the state minimum funding formula) that are the prerogative of every Florida community. Thus, while it is not on the edge of bankruptcy or in serious retrenchment as are so many districts of the Northeast and Midwest, Hillsborough's budgets are quite lean, and its salaries are generally low.

In sum, the Hillsborough County school district reflects and serves a modern, progressive community that has somehow managed to retain much of the stability and many of the values of earlier, more rural days. For instance, Tampa is often spoken of as "like Atlanta 20 years ago," a comparison that evokes many a combination of urban and rural charms. The pace of life is pleasant; the populace friendly. And cooperativeness, fairness, and a sort of "let's solve our problems to everybody's benefit" attitude seem characteristic.

Fifteen years ago, however, Hillsborough County was merely on the verge of becoming this idyllic "young Atlanta." In these earlier days, it was known more for its political turmoil and corruption than for its progressivism and promising future. This was reflected in the school system, which at the time was led by an elected superintendency. In the opinion of most of our informants, the electoral feature of the superintendency caused the districts to become thoroughly embroiled in and permeated with politics in the most negative meaning of the term. By all reports, the Hillsborough

County school system of the 1950s and 1960s was characterized by cronyism and buddyism at best, and, more typically, by naked patronage in a political spoils system of both instructional and administrative appointments.

This is not to say that all principal (or instructional) appointments made during this period were bad educational choices. Clearly they were not, for a number of the key leaders who developed and implemented the reforms that produced the current principal selection procedure served as principals during this era. (And a number of teachers hired during these days have emerged as outstanding principals under the new selection procedure.) Nevertheless, as one informant commented, "Even the good people back then were chosen for the wrong reasons." Morale was low for both teachers and administrators, and many well qualified professionals did not bother to apply for advancement.

The situation came to a head in the late 1960s. Increasing discontent and burgeoning scandals of a very serious nature led the board to remove the last elected superintendent from office and switch to an appointed superintendency. Our informants without exception referred to this as "a time of great turmoil and chaos," characterized by much "confusion" and "loss of confidence in the schools." To almost all, it was still unpleasant to recall, and was quickly put aside during our interviews.

Into this crisis stepped an Interim Superintendent, appointed for one year while a national search for a new superintendent was being conducted. Under his leadership and the leadership of two of his Assistant Superintendents--Paul Wharton, now Assistant for Administration and Operations, and Frank Farmer, now Assistant Superintendent of Instruction (both of whom moved up into his administration from principalships)--work immediately began on improving both the cadre of principals and the method of selecting principals. As Wharton rather delicately put it, "During that first six-month period, we were getting rid of lots of poor principals. Then we started thinking about ways to get better principals."

Improving appointments and the appointment process was the heart of the matter, for it was the naked patronage in hiring and advancement that had ultimately set off the crisis. As Farmer said, "It was a chaotic situation, and to try to pull things together we sought a new way of selecting principals." To meet this need, these three leaders developed the basics of the selection process in effect today. The key to the process then and now is the entry-level screening, and this was the first element to be put into place. Other important elements such as the curriculum specialist step on the elementary principalship career ladder came later. The purpose of instituting the entry screening was twofold. First, it signaled the objectivity, fairness, and professionalism that was to characterize the new era. Second, it encouraged qualified candidates to come forward, for now they had a fair chance. Replacements were needed, and the district had long been having problems recruiting staff.

Just as a "rough approximation" of today's Screening Committee was getting off the ground, a new superintendent, Dr. Ray Shelton, was appointed (in 1967). Shelton, who came in from the Midwest, took the position on one condition: "School Board members must stay out of personnel. I told them, 'If you recommend someone to me for a position I guarantee you it will be the kiss of death.'" This was quite acceptable to the Board, for one of its primary charges to Shelton was, "Clean this up and develop a professionally operated system." And there were many problems. For instance, the state funding formula was considered inequitable, salaries were low, and there were serious shortages of applicants for positions. Nonetheless, the hiring and promotion processes were top priority for both the Board and the new superintendent.

Shortly after Shelton took over, another crisis hit the system. The teachers struck in the spring of 1968, and many principals, assistant principals, and deans struck with them. One of the demands of the striking teachers was that there be a screening process for promotion so that everyone would have a fair opportunity to be considered for advancement. This lent even more momentum to the direction in which Shelton and his staff were already moving. Further, the fact that so many school administrators decided to strike was of considerable concern to the administration. Ultimately, this led to a careful rethinking of the principals' role, and substantial strengthening of the career ladders and grooming/development process by which aspiring principals are trained and socialized.

Over the years, the new principal selection process was "tinkered with"--always building from the foundation stone of the screening--until it reached its present form in 1975. Since then, the only change has been to adopt the elimination of the highest and lowest rating scores about two or three years ago.

Assistant Superintendent Wharton and Superintendent Shelton have emerged as the major architects of the selection process. One interviewee captured the comments of many with the statement, "The refinement [of the selection system] and the belief that it will work is a credit to the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent [Wharton]--to their honesty and integrity." By general consensus, Wharton is particularly vital to both the development and success of the process. A principal himself (in Hillsborough) for almost 20 years before moving into central administration in the late 1960's to help build the new order, Wharton is intensely and deeply committed to maintaining the integrity and the validity of the selection process. His commitment is shared not only by his peers at the top of the district hierarchy, but also by others (principals and candidates) throughout the system. Hillsborough's approach seemed to us to embody a remarkably consistent and deeply shared vision. It is as though the early days of patronage, chaos, and crisis have become a widely institutionalized memory which evokes an attitude of "never again," and whose opposite is the consensually desired, widely owned present selection process.

Perceptions of Participants in the Process

Without exception, our informants felt that Hillsborough's principal selection process is "fair," "objective," and "offers a chance to everyone." We did not interview those who failed the screening or those who had repeatedly (more than three times) failed to secure appointments. However, these groups were often referred to by our informants, who frequently echoed the interviewee who said, "There's some dissatisfaction. Those that don't get jobs are maybe a little bit bitter. They don't feel the Committee can really judge them at their best performance." Another said, "I've heard the comment [from those that don't get the jobs] that you have to know the right people. Maybe in some cases that does help, but it's not how most people feel. Basically it's a fair process".

When asked to identify the chief strengths of the process, informants repeatedly brought out this point of "fairness" or "objectivity." It appears that the diverse membership and the individually felt professionalism of the Screening Committee have had the desired effect for, when they think of "the process," most Hillsborough staff think immediately of "the Screening." We were repeatedly told that the Screening is "fair and objective" because it "minimizes the political process in hiring"; "is done by several people--it's not just one man's opinion"; "gets at really meaningful questions"; "involves people who are actually on the firing line"; "gets everybody's point of view"; and "encourages everyone to apply--everyone feels they could go down and screen and be considered."

Further, no one appears to have any serious criticisms of the later steps in the process, that is, the Interview and appointment decision-making. There is trust and confidence in the integrity of the district leadership. Respondents often pointed with pride to the fact that Shelton has held the superintendency for almost 15 years now, an impressive record for a large school district in these times. Many also pointed with pride to the successful track record of the selection process, noting that Hillsborough principals appointed in the last 15 years are "better trained," "more experienced," "more instructionally oriented," and "know that they get the job because of their ability and keep their jobs because of their ability to produce rather than some other criteria."

When asked to identify the chief weaknesses of Hillsborough's selection process, many of our informants' first response was, "I can't honestly think of any." This frankly astonished us when we first heard it, and caused us to be skeptical of both the individual respondent and the respondent sampling. Hence, we took special care to test our concerns, both by pressing the individual informants rather hard on the question and by rechecking the validity of the sample. At the end of a week of interviewing and closely studying the district, our skepticism was allayed. The fact is that--with the probable exception of those who have failed the screening or repeatedly failed to secure appointments--the participants are deeply satisfied with the process.

A few suggestions for improvement did emerge, but these were in the context of substantial satisfaction with the process. For instance, several informants expressed interest in some type of individually prescribed development experience or internship in the principal role itself for those in the final stages of consideration. Along these same lines, a number also offered what was perhaps the most negative criticism--that a better job should be done of notifying and counseling those candidates who go through the Interview and do not succeed in securing an appointment. As one informant commented, "These are outstanding people or they would not have been called in. They need to tell them why they didn't select them and what skill to work on for next time."

When we pressed, others commented on the inescapable limitations of any interview or screening process, noting that "there are good people who just do not screen well," and "you can't judge sincerity and true feelings about youngsters in a 30-minute interview." On the same topic of the Screening Committee itself, a few informants suggested that different Committees might vary in their "leniency" or "strictness," and hence it might be a good idea to empanel a standing Committee for a period of time or, alternatively, to standardize the questions available to each Committee.

The Future

In the eyes of our informants, the future for Hillsborough County's principal selection process is stable and bright. The district leadership, principals, and candidates have a solid vision of its indefinite operation in its present form and its continued success in identifying and placing outstanding candidates. No changes are planned or contemplated, and, in fact, our queries about its stability were met with some puzzlement. The general reaction was essentially, "Well why would it not continue? What is there to change?"

Our question about the future, however, was grounded in two critical features of the system that became strongly apparent early in our visit. First, the process in part reflects the remarkable stability of both the community in general and the school system in particular. On the one hand, the community's growth during the past decade has proceeded at a very manageable pace. Hence, the distruptions often typical of extremely rapid growth have been largely avoided, while the benefits of steadily increasing prosperity have been maximized. However, the area is generally regarded as "on the threshold of a real boom." As Chamber of Commerce publications note, "This area is projected to be one of the fastest growing in the Sunbelt by 1983." An impressive infrastructure has been put into place to handle this expansion, and there is solid planning for an eagerly anticipated future of growth and prosperity.

Nevertheless, we could not help but wonder whether the more rural cultural values of cooperativeness, good will and trust--which help to shape the style and success of Hillsborough's principal selection process--will hold in the face of rapid urbanization. At present, however, this is a question only in our minds, not in the minds of our informants.

Related to this issue is a second key feature of the process--its deep identification with the leaders who have designed and implemented it. As virtually all our informants noted, the leadership of Superintendent Shelton and Assistant Superintendent Wharton are of special importance, for they have had the primary leadership roles in principal selection and their "integrity, honesty, and professionalism" are viewed as the keys to the installation and credibility of the process. Much credit is also given to the professional leadership of other key figures, such as Assistant Superintendent Farmer and General Elementary Director Worden.

Hearing this, we could not help but wonder about the consequences of the loss of one or more of these key leaders, particularly Shelton or Wharton. We queried extensively on this issue, and were once again met with sincere puzzlement. The general response was summed up by one informant, who said, "Well it would be terrible to lose any of our top leadership, but there are a number of people who could take it [the principal selection process] over." Respondents then proceeded to name several second-line administrators who were confidently perceived as "groomed and ready to step in." As one respondent said, "The personalities would be different, and that would be a loss, but the system itself would continue."

Clearly then, in the minds of staff, Hillsborough's selection process is not dependent on the leadership of particular individuals. While the contribution of key leaders in developing and securing the process is widely recognized and hailed, it has taken on independent strength and viability, and is now firmly rooted as district custom.

Costs and Benefits

Hillsborough's principal selection process has few costs and many benefits to the system. The chief cost is the time required of staff who participate on the Screening Committees. However, this is offset by two factors. First, the staff perceive the invitation as an honor and the activity as an opportunity to make a real contribution to the governance and the future of the district. (In fact, we did not hear a single complaint about the amount of time required.) Second, many Committee participants thoroughly enjoy airing their own particular problems as questions, meeting and interacting with staff from other areas and levels in the district, and "seeing the new talent coming up." As one said, "It's kind of like the NFL draft. You get to see the young players coming along."

A second cost of the process is the intensive involvement required of the top leadership in grooming, socializing, training, talent spotting, and on-the-job assessment of candidates in the pipeline. For instance, the success of the process at the elementary level is heavily dependent on the development (or inservice) experiences provided to the curriculum specialists. Similarly, the final selection and appointment of principals from the specialist and assistant principalship pools is in part dependent on the top administrators' ongoing review of their actual job performance. Hence, these leaders must make it a point to visit schools constantly, to work closely with the various councils and committees where candidates try their wings, and to be generally and intimately involved with the daily life of the schools and school staff.

This cost, if it can accurately be so termed, is viewed by these leaders as the essence of their role. As one commented, "What else are we supposed to do [if we don't visit schools and keep up with what's going on]!"

The benefits to the system are perceived to be myriad. They range from the restoration and maintenance of public confidence in the integrity and professionalism of Hillsborough educators to the encouragement and identification of "truly outstanding people." While none of our informants made overly much of the issue, it is also worth noting that student achievement in Hillsborough County has been on the rise since the mid-1970s. Certainly there are many factors that account for this, including the district's general emphasis on curriculum and accountability. Nevertheless, by all accounts the role of the principal has specifically changed to emphasize educational leadership, and the selection process reflects this change in the career ladders, the emphasis on the role of the final Interview Committee, and most of all, the composition and role of the Screening Committees. As one top administrator said, "Those Committees are very, very interested in what is happening in schools. For instance, this district used to appoint junior high football coaches to elementary principalships. Now those elementary committees will eat a junior high coach, even one who meets the [minimum] criteria. They can't pass here--an elementary principal has to know elementary programs."

In sum, Hillsborough County has devised a cohesive and widely shared principal selection process that works to the widespread benefit of virtually every constituency. The top administration is pleased with the caliber of candidates and principals the process produces. Candidates feel challenged and professionalized by the system. Principals feel empowered and validated--they know how and why they were chosen to be principals in Hillsborough County. And, last but by no means least, students appear to be receiving strong and effective educational leadership.

CHAPTER 4

Use of the Internship in Hayward Unified School District, California

Introduction

Our search for school districts actively engaged in efforts to improve procedures for selecting principals through the use of internships resulted in suggestions from several informed specialists in educational administration that the Hayward Unified School District (HUSD) of Hayward, California merited direct examination as a district investing in an innovative and excellent internship program of its own devising. The Hayward Assistant Superintendent for Personnel, Jack Weinstein, welcomed our inquiry and arranged for a three-day visit in March, 1982.

In this chapter, we first present a description of the HUSD's Administrative Intern Program (AIP); second, discussion of the AIP's historical context; third, perspectives of the interns; next, some notes on the AIP in relation to women in leadership in Hayward, selection into the AIP itself, and the scope of various groups' participation; and finally, commentary on the aftermath of the AIP and some of its benefits and costs.

Program Description

In 1978, HUSD Superintendent Allan Bushnell charged the administrative staff with the task of preparing future leaders for the district's public schools. The resulting program began operating in 1979. Its approach consists of locating and then training potential principals from within the district.

Each April, all certificated non-management employees of HUSD are notified of AIP by the posting of an announcement like the ones shown in Exhibits 4-1 and 4-2. Exhibit 4-2 sets forth the eligibility requirements and application and selection procedures of AIP. Note that to become eligible, applicants must be certificated educators with at least three years of experience, at least one of which must be in HUSD. In adddition, a candidate must hold a California administrative credential or be willing to enroll in a

Exhibit 4-1

ANNOUNCEMENT FOR ADMINISTRATIVE TRAINING PROGRAM

HAYWARD UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
24411 AMADOR STREET
HAYWARD, CALIFORNIA 94540

ADMINISTRATIVE TRAINING PROGRAM

The Hayward Unified School District is seeking candidates for its Administrative Training Program. Candidates will be selected on the basis of having demonstrated the potential to become an exceptional administrator. Those selected will serve as intern trainees in a continuing program, which is scheduled to begin during the 1981-82 school year.

There will be an important orientation meeting on THURSDAY, APRIL 2, beginning promptly at 3:45 p.m. in the Board Room, at which time the program will be explained and application forms and other materials made available.

District certified non-management employees who have an interest in applying for future administrative positions in the Hayward Unified School District should attend this orientation meeting.

Questions regarding the Administrative Training Program will be answered on Thursday, April 2.

Exhibit 4-2

ANNOUNCEMENT FOR ADMINISTRATIVE TRAINING PROGRAM

HAYWARD UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Memorandum

TO: All Certified Personnel

FROM: Jack Weinstein, Assistant Superintendent - Personnel

SUBJECT: ADMINISTRATIVE TRAINING PROGRAM

DATE:

The Hayward Unified School District is seeking candidates for its 1979-80 Administrative Training Program. The District plans to select candidates who possess the potential to serve as exceptional administrators.

There will be an orientation meeting Thursday, JUNE in the Board Room, 24411 Amador St., beginning promptly at 3:45 p.m. Application forms and materials will be available at that time.

In order to qualify, candidates must be certificated employees with at least three years training experience, of which one must be in the Hayward Unified School District.

Any certificated employee desiring an administrative position must successfully complete this training. All applicants must meet the California certification requirements prior to their appointment to any administrative position.

Screening will be in two steps before final selection for training which will begin in the Fall of 1979.

Step I - Screening

	Task	Who	Where	Date
1.	Application Completed	Candidate	Personnel Office	June ___
2.	Simulated Problem Exercise	Candidate	Personnel Office	June ___
3.	Screen & Select Applicants for Step II	Selection Committee	Personnel Office	June ___

Step II

	Task	Who	Where
1.	Simulated Problem Exercise II	Candidates Selected	Personnel Office
2.	Group Interview	Interview Committee	Administrative Office
3.	Personal Interview	Asst. Supt.-Personnel	Personnel Office
4.	Select Candidates	Selection Committee	

This training program is being designed for a three year period.

Initial training will take place throughout the 1979-80 school year and continue for two additional years.

Thank you for your interest in the Administrative Training Program.

credentialing program at a university. Similarly, only applicants holding an M.A. or M.Ed. degree or willing to earn one during the AIP are considered eligible. The M.A. need not be in educational administration, however.

The office of Professor Perazzo of California State University, former chairperson of the Department of Educational Administration, is located on the Hayward campus just about two miles from HUSD central offices. He has developed the Leadership Academy, a consortium of 16 surrounding school districts, including HUSD, plus other agencies. AIP candidates for an M.A. can enroll readily in his departmental program, while others, including appointed line administrators, can enroll in the inservice training offered by the off-campus Academy. AIP interns can and do choose degree programs at other nearby campuses, including San Francisco State University, so Professor Perazzo's programs are not compulsory. His M.A. program has the advantage, however, of grouping 25 matriculants from the consortium together in all core courses for a year, thus providing a sturdy local peer group which reinforces and enhances AIP learning for those engaged together in both at the same time (see Appendix B).

In 1979, 70 interested teachers showed up for the first AIP orientation, and 54 filed applications. The 13 members of the Superintendent's Cabinet screened these applications and narrowed the set from 54 to about 31, who were then interviewed and rated. Some 22 were then selected as interns. (As will be discussed below, in subsequent years, the number applying and the number selected both declined substantially.)

All 54 applicants wrote letters of intent and did the problem exercises, which were evaluated without name identification. The Personnel Office then prepared a file on each of the 31 selected candidates. These were interviewed one at a time for 30 minutes each by six-member groups from the Cabinet. Interviewers completed separate, undiscussed, numerical rating sheets on each candidate and candidates also did another written problem exercise. Personnel conducted private interviews later with those who were not finally selected.

Exhibit 4-3 summarizes the didactic content of seven full-day formal sessions attended by all interns (Part II). It also summarizes the

Exhibit 4-3

DESCRIPTION OF TRAINING PROGRAM

I. Opportunities for training may include:

1. Formal training sessions
2. Attendance at Council meetings
3. On site meetings
4. Attendance at HUSD Board of Education meetings
5. Internships
6. Visitations
7. Substituting in various positions, e.g., "Dean for a Day"
8. Observations
9. Participation in interviews
10. Conference and workshop participation

II. Areas for Administrative Training

1. Evaluation of Personnel
2. Curriculum Development and Instruction
3. Contract Management
4. Conflict Management
5. Budget Management
6. Facilities Management
7. Time Management
8. Policy, Administrative Regulations and Administrative Exhibit Development
9. Orientation of Central Office - Business Services, Instruction, Instructional Support and Personnel
10. Role of Superintendent and Board
11. State and Federal Programs
12. Special Education
13. Discipline and Control
14. Due Process
15. Student Rights

III. Skills to be developed --

1. Listening
2. Problem Solving
3. Motivation
4. Public Relations
5. Leadership
6. Communications - verbal and nonverbal
7. Human Relations

variety of informal and practicum opportunities that have been tried by AIP designers and interns themselves (Part I). The best developed of these is the task of interviewing three administrators in each of the four divisions of HUSD central offices and preparing and filing reports on these with Assistant Superintendent Weinstein. This task builds familiarity with district organizations, operations, and staff, which is essential to later functioning as a line administrator. It also builds interviewing and reporting skills. Part III of Exhibit 3 lists the skills AIP tries to develop in interns. All three parts of the training program are planned to intersect and overlap. Exhibit 4-4 shows the calendar of didactic sessions for 1981-1982, but it should be clear that these are not the "main event" in AIP. Most sessions are led by HUSD senior officers, but outside experts are retained to teach parts of many sessions.

Some interns withdraw voluntarily during each year as their experiences lead them to conclude that they do not want to become administrators or that their performance is probably not competitive. There is no position awaiting anyone upon completion. This is stated explicitly at the orientation session. There are also no posted grades or other ingredients of intra-group competition built into AIP, but there are tacit social comparisons made among interns as peers and between supervisors _qua_ trainers.

AIP ends in June, with the close of the school year. Vacancies for vice-principalships, principalships, and similar administrative positions are then announced and interns may choose to become candidates, as do others in the system who are already qualified. The HUSD selection procedure is closely analogous to the procedure for selection into the AIP, with the same Cabinet members performing the same roles.

An intern who has completed her M.A. and who is appointed to an administrative vacancy serves, if she accepts, as an intern principal for a year. This probationary condition was not built into AIP but was added in 1980 by Superintendent Bushnell because of his belief that the training period is not yet complete and because changes in administrative assignments are commonplace within HUSD anyway. The intern principals and vice principals interviewed do _not_ think of themselves in this way, however, and they expect to continue in their posts or very similar ones in the years ahead.

Exhibit 4-4

ADMINISTRATIVE TRAINING PROGRAM

Calendar

NOVEMBER 10, 1981

Session 1

Orientation
3:30 p.m.
Jack Weinstein

DECEMBER 10, 1981

Session 2

Communications/Listening Skills
8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Joel Thornley

JANUARY 12, 1982

Session 3

The Principalship
8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Ron Blake/Henry Nicolini

FEBRUARY 9, 1982

Session 4

Progressive Discipline/Evaluation
8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Jack Weinstein

MARCH 9, 1982

Session 5

The Superintendency/Budget Planning
8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Allan Bushnell

APRIL 15, 1982

Session 6

Classified Employees/Services
8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Eleanor Parker

MAY 11, 1982

Session 7

Human Relations
8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Joan Chambers

JUNE 8, 1982

Session 8

Planning & Organization
8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Joel Thornley

Historical Context

Hayward was from its incorporation in the late 1800s until World War II an agricultural supply preserve for Oakland and San Francisco. Since 1942, it has emerged steadily as an industrial and commercial production and trade nexus within the rapidly expanding metropolitan complex of the Bay Area. It is connected by the Bay Area Rapid Transit with all other parts of the metro. It stands at the foot of a vast causeway and bridge linking it with the San Francisco side of the Bay, and it commands an ideal location on four major highways that lead to all points in the region.

New and advantageous as its location, transport system, and physical plant and land use patterns are, Hayward's period of transition from an agrarian Eden (the term was used often from 1870 to 1940) to a light industrial suburban mecca was quite brief. It grew from 30,000 residents in World War II to nearly 100,000 in 1970, and then it began to shrink. During the 1970s, public school enrollments shrank from a high point of 32,000 to 23,000, and they dropped to about 17,000 by 1981.

The growth during the preceding three decades was so rapid that some of the earlier community forms of cooperation, self-sufficiency, and rural traditionalism survived the change, although by the late 1960s many conflicting value preferences had begun to join with deep urbanization to transform Hayward into a kind of extension of Oakland. Socioeconomic and racial/ethnic changes in student enrollments were great and carried the transformation into the public schools as well. Not many years after it unified and after its beloved original high school was demolished to make way for land use changes, in fact, HUSD was becoming 50 percent non-Anglo and was, in the words of Superintendent Bushnell, "belly-up, financially, by 1976."

Allan Bushnell was appointed in that year as a kind of one-man rescue party. With a Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley, and with superintendencies in southern California, New Jersey, and Long Island to his credit, Dr. Bushnell arrived with a reputation as a financial wizard and a vigorous trouble-shooter. His predecessor had been a native son of Hayward who came up through the school ranks. Dr. Bushnell's mission in HUSD was to turn it "belly down financially," to unify the district fully, to upgrade instruction, and to pare down the rising numbers of excess seats. There were other goals but these were major ones and in his view, a superintendent ought to set a series of four- to seven-year goals, accomplish them, and move on to trouble-shoot elsewhere.

Superintendent Bushnell is thus a self-defined journeyman administrator, as distinguished from a native committed to remaining in the district. The exigencies of enrollment and resource declines combined enabled him to negotiate with the Board of HUSD for exceptionally strong control over all aspects of administration and program implementation. His contract for the superintendency (he is two years into the second of two four-year terms) states, for example:

> The Superintendent shall have complete freedom to organize, reorganize, and arrange the administrative and supervisory, instruction, business, and operational staff and affairs, in the manner which, in his judgment, best serves the School District.
>
> The Superintendent shall also be responsible for the selection, placement, and transfer of all personnel.

Thus, in 1977, Dr. Bushnell had the authority needed to plan and implement the closing of first one and then nine additional school facilities. He helped to counsel six of the affected principals into retirement or early retirement. In the latter cases, he did not create an expensive plan for "bringing up" the residual years in whole or even in part, but he did fashion terms which gave outgoing principals ample lead time to develop alternatives.

The AIP grew up out of this combination of historical developments: the period of retrenchment had begun. Administrative positions were becoming extremely scarce, yet the need for increased leadership competency was acute and the generation who had entered school administration between 1940 and 1950 was approaching age 65. An unusually empowered superintendent, who came with a mandate to both retrench and to upgrade quality, needed to build a strong team of line and staff administrators. (One of his slogans in the AIP literature is, "To have a good administrative team you need a well trained first string and a developing bench.") Two years into the AIP, Dr. Bushnell began a second program of "Prescriptive Inservice for Principals."

There have been three manifest objections to AIP within HUSD during its three-year life. The Teachers Association charged initially that AIP was designed to take "free labor" from teachers for use in administrative work. Care has been taken therefore to pay for substitute teacher coverage as part of regular AIP operations. The Administrators Association has complained that an appointed principal should not be deemed an intern and has noted that this was not part of the original AIP plan. Under California law, this association has no contract status, however, and the objection has generated very little heat to date. Some Board members have asked whether AIP is worth the cost of operating it in a time of cutbacks; others want more say over who gets appointed, and AIP does little to expand their already negligible influence. In very hard times for public education, these are formidable challenges, as we shall note later in more detail.

The Interns

Superintendent Bushnell said he installed AIP because "I became appalled at the low quality of preparation characteristic of school administrators here and elsewhere. They seemed to me to learn how to repeat the mistakes made by others and they suffered from isolation on the job.... I wanted to correct for these conditions and I wanted to combat the choice of principals through 'buddyism'."

What is most striking about the working selves presented by the interns during our interviews was the way all of them seemed to exceed the aims of their superintendent. They are observably more than well prepared and capable of devising their own continuing, even lifelong, education as leaders. They are more than team players enjoying the benefits of membership in the HUSD circle of administrators, integrative as those benefits appear to be. They are also more than mere exceptions to the practices of "buddyism," "cronyism," and nepotism so deplored by Dr. Bushnell. Their most commonly shared and imposing characteristic appeared to be high ego strength.

Each has his or her own reasons for wanting to become a school administrator and the reasons have been thought out with care over a long period of time. Most came up out of classrooms within HUSD, but a few were drawn toward Hayward because they heard of AIP while working in other Bay Area school districts. The diversity of sources of experience, educational specialization, and life histories is great and there is an encouraging mix of males and females, age groups, and racial/ethnic origins, although Anglos are a bit too predominant for the composition of HUSD, and both Bushnell and Weinstein are recruiting teachers out of state in an effort to remedy this shortfall.

All of the interns interviewed are upwardly mobile and occupation-centered, yet all are also realistic about the psychic costs as well as the benefits of preparing to leave classrooms for administrative offices. They appreciate their movement into the team membership defined by the Superintendent's Cabinet, yet they are not overly identified with its norms or rhetoric. They offer independent criticisms of both HUSD and AIP in a relaxed and independent manner, but they expect to rely on their own initiatives in learning from their internships and they prefer to design their own "field trials."

All of them regard the AIP as most worthwhile for its orienting, role-building, and associative features. They do not think of the didactic sessions as formally preparatory, nor do any of them believe that the homework task products are a sound basis for evaluation. Those who are simultaneously engaged in graduate studies appreciate the "theory learnings" as they call them, but they do not give much credence to the term paper exercises or examinations as methods for leadership preparation. In short, it is sustained interaction with supervising principals and some central office administrators, combined with some chances to try out on the job, which are regarded as uniquely worthwhile.

One aspect of the apparently exceptional ego strength of the interns derives from their content specialties. They are self-confident about curriculum theory and the design of instruction in part because of their fields of preparation and practice. Many have specialized in categorical programs in Title I and Miller-Unruh projects funded by the state. Others come from special education, librarianships, reading and language specialties, and deep immersion in such fields as social studies and counseling psychology. Moreover, many have taught at more than one grade level and are disposed to move up or down the age group ladder with ease. Thus, they have the confidence that comes from content specialization, while their temperaments make them open to serving as generalists.

Every intern believed that, in the words of one of them, "In Hayward, entering the AIP means a big change the minute you throw your hat in the ring by applying for entry." The biggest change comes from a separation from one's teaching peers. "The teachers you know best remain cordial and encouraging," said one intern, "but a kind of wall goes up so far as sharing rumors and problems is concerned." Some but not all interns thought it would be hard to regain one's former place among teachers in the event of not being placed into administration, and all interns made it clear they considered the displacement and the risk of return to be unimportant when compared with the opportunity to enter the AIP.

Some interns remarked that most of the teachers "do not care" about administration. One intern said most of his teaching peers said, "Well, if that's what you want for yourself, good luck." The attitude is not aimed at the AIP as such. It comes up out of strong sense of social distance between the roles. Another intern thought this was being reduced as teachers saw "that good administrative appointments are now being made." Still another observed that on location in training, teachers think of interns as an extra pair of hands and want to trade off tasks with her.

The isolation from teaching peers is remedied by a progressive deepening of membership in the administrative group. This change is felt as so important by interns that nearly all stressed that learning to build the new set of relationships was the real curriculum of the AIP. The HUSD is large, after all, and for most teachers contacts with central office staff are very infrequent except through the AIP. The Association of Administrators also hosts the interests and inducts them socially though not officially into the organization.

Women in Leadership

The AIP has opened the ranks of administration to women in Hayward. Before World War II, women used to become elementary school principals but rarely anything "higher." Today in HUSD, as a result of the AIP and related reductions in sexism in the Bay Area, "only jobs like dean of women are sex-bound," said a women intern, "and even the deans deal with both sexes in some matters." One woman has become a junior high school principal and several are newly appointed as elementary principals and high school vice-principals. "When a woman becomes the principal of one of Hayward's comprehensive high schools," said one intern, "this district will be fully open to both sexes." She thought this could happen very soon.

Incidentally, contrary to our Phase 1 research finding, the women interns and appointed administrators whom I met conformed to no stereotype. They ranged in height from very short to very tall. Their appearances and styles of dress ranged from dowdy to sophisticated and glamorous, and their manners from quiet and reflective to loud and loquacious.

Selection Itself

Selection as an intern does not rely upon "buddyism," and selection for a principalship is affected deeply by the merits of performance as an intern. All those interviewed subscribe to these propositions, although the newcomers to AIP are not *sure* about the latter. To this extent, then, AIP has accomplished the Superintendent's main aim.

Several interns are conscious of the ways in which they are "pre-selected" into internships, however, and at least two are convinced that principal selection itself remains a *political* process. Being the only male on an elementary school faculty still affects the pre-selection, as does committee work, ancillary contact with administrators as in guidance counseling; and coming to the very favorable attention of an education professor can also help.

In other words, the scales that weigh the applicants are held by a few key senior administrators whose judgments are biased by prior acquaintance and by the recommendations of peers. Rating and paper grades are reviewed earnestly, but the procedure is confined to Cabinet members. There are no external appraisers and merit scores are not disclosed.

These conditions appear to exert even greater influence over the later appointment/selection process, moreover. When an intern completes her year of training, she does not learn of her relative standing, nor is feedback on homework and practicum tasks frequent or systematic. Above all else, the group of raters for a principalship has no new or independent raters in its midst. Thus, it could be the case that an intern pre-selected through favoritism could simply enjoy the benefits of a "halo effect" that hovered above him from before AIP entry until the final, later selection and appointment procedure.

Nearly all of those interviewed were somewhat aware of these conditions, yet their levels of trust in the processes were very high. Several were convinced that the political feature was primarily a matter of testing for some degree of social value convergence. According to these respondents, HUSD administrators are concerned with "firming up" the business-like qualities of staff and with "leaving far behind" the era of informality and ease that once characterized parts of the community. The virtues of efficiency, punctuality, fiscal prudence, and attention to procedural detail are visibly stressed.

Scope of Participation

Community leaders, board members, parents, teachers, and students play no part as such in the AIP. Business leaders may be invited to contribute to training sessions, as in the case of executives from nearby Sperry Rand, but only when their expertise matches the topic.

No one interviewed believed it should be any other way. Community relations are managed with high efficiency by a full-time staff unit in the central office and some Cabinet members belong to organizations such as

Rotary. The HUSD design differs greatly in these respects from most districts in our Phase 1 research sample.

Participation scope is extremely narrow then, apparently as a natural extension of the hegemony over administration which the Board has given their Superintendent. He wards off deeper and more extensive co-involvement and his assistant superintendents--all of whom were in place before he took charge of HUSD--administer in ways that are consistent with this premise. In this circumstance, it is hard to imagine how the AIP could become more inclusive of other affected parties. All emphasis is given to a relatively closed system of team selection, induction, socialization, and cohesiveness.

There are several costs that accrue from this design: (1) AIP may achieve no enduring legitimacy in HUSD or its supporting constituencies. Lacking such legitimacy, it may not outlast the tenure of Superintedent Bushnell, who hopes to leave in 1983. (2) AIP could become sterile or irrelevant in content if sources of ideas, topics, and tasks are not multiplied. (3) Most serious of all is the possibility that teachers and parents will not become equipped to appreciate the difference between new and old leadership performances. Informed leadership depends for its efficacy upon equally informed followers.

For the present, these are conjectural hypotheses. The AIP is perceived by those who created and maintain it (and by those who have gone through it) as a vast improvement over the status quo ante. The range of its future functioning must narrow down to a very few interns each year after 1982 in any event. Those who built it do not expect it to maintain its primacy over the long term.

Practicum

If socialization into the administrative team is the event of greatest importance to AIP interns, opportunities to try the new self out on the job are certainly of next greatest importance. Practicum experience is hard to arrange in all training programs, however, and AIP is no exception. Interns receive only one-half day of released time each month (some have arranged for much more time than this) as an official resource, and places to gain practical but supervised experience are often lodged in schools remote from the interns' regular work site. More crucial, probably, is the fact that some line administrators are better at sharing tasks and at supervising than are others.

One elementary school principal who distinguished himself in this regard is Frank Perry, who made such effective training use of two half-time interns one year that he was assigned this year to serve as the AIP Field Training Coordinator. He has helped to upgrade the quality of the practicum for all 1981-1982 interns. Even with his advocacy and with close support from Jack Weinstein, some interns get fuller, more relevant practice opportunities than others, and the arrangements have an uneven quality, according to those interviewed.

The first two interns assigned to work under Perry at the Rousse School helped to solve a variety of problems that were stressing that school seriously. The new principal now has three interns under her, and this appears to be an overload producing some faculty friction. Weinstein, Perry and others in Personnel do make an authentic effort to tailor opportunities for practice to the interests of many interns, however. A high school coach who had long complained about field and locker room conditions has been doing administrative work with the plant operations and maintenance divisions, for instance, as a rotation of "angle of vision." Within schools, some problems continue to arise out of the ambiguity caused by the fact that interns in training are still officially members of the teachers' bargaining unit.

Kathleen Goldman, who is now an Intern Elementary Principal, wrote her M.A. thesis at California State University-Hayward on An Evaluation of the Administrative Training Program in the Hayward Unified School District (1981). She found that the practicum assignments were of high importance to interns and that they exhibited two major flaws: they tended to be workable for some trainees and much less so for others; and the practice performances tended to remain unevaluated so far as the interns themselves could determine.

Aftermath of the AIP

Respondents who had been appointed to vice principalships and principalships in the months after completing the AIP or a year later believe that the selection decision was based primarily on their ratings from group interviews and the scores on their written tests. They remember the interviews as being very demanding, stressful encounters where they thought their abilities were being tested with rigor. Jack Weinstein shares this opinion and takes pride in the reputation that has accrued to the procedure he did so much to design. A reputation for rigor tends naturally to beckon future candidates who have reason to think they are outstanding.

The flaw in the procedure was identified by one principal, however, as a matter of a *closed* testing, rating, and choice procedure. No one of independent auspice and no one not already very familiar with the AIP graduates is involved. I have already pointed out the danger in the possible "halo effect" that may result, but the damage is greater than this may suggest. According to successful appointees, those who are selected are not sure why they "won," and those who "lose" and return to teaching are perceived by others and reputedly by themselves as failures, when they may in fact have been rated *nearly* identically.

Unfortunately, the closed-system aspects carry over into the appointment protocol itself. Appointments tend to be announced unilaterally at group sessions called for other purposes or called as a kind of "surprise session," where the Superintendent says, "Do you know why you're here?" This protocol is very negatively received because the prospective appointees lack opportunities to explore terms and conditions, or to negotiate for alternatives. They also lack a sense of how and why a particular choice of position was made in their own cases. Because the onset of a new job is always influential in affecting performance later on, this is a small error in courtesy which can have large consequences.

Mitigating the harm in HUSD is the high level of interpersonal trust expressed by nearly all those interviewed. Unilateral, autocratic, and inconsiderate manners appear within the team to be charged up to the price exacted by strong, efficient leadership from above. There is also a candor about expressing feelings which suggests that the protocol is gruff but caring. One respondent said she was so angered by the appointment announcement that "I went to see the Superintendent and told him the process was deplorable and why." Her appointment was changed favorably for her a year later.

Some later appointments appear to have been handled more sensitively, moreover, with some being implemented one-to-one by Assistant Superintendent Weinstein. There is in this the suggestion that the team can move to correct its errors although this may not be a matter of cause and effect.

Finally in this regard, several interns mentioned the delicate issue posed by the demographics of the AIP. The Cabinet lacks a projection for future administrative vacancies. How many interns should be trained? What is the sensible ratio of winners to losers to those waiting in the pipeline as AIP graduates from yesteryear? Some interns believe the losers become embittered, not because they believed they had any guarantee but because they cannot interpret the process or their future. This would be less delicate and more ordinary if the AIP and subsequent selection were themselves less structured and determinate in character. As things are, the sense of discrepancy is great and a few exceptionally able educators may become leading opponents of change.

Benefits and Costs

The AIP works in Hayward to train, assess, and select better educational leaders than most procedures we have studied from coast to coast. It has met its founders' major objectives and the expense has been slight when contrasted with the yield in increased competency, organizational unity, and reported impacts on the instructional services of many Hayward public schools.

Its benefits spring from its auspice. It is the creature of an exceptionally autonomous and contractually empowered Superintendent, conjoined with the excellence fostered by a contemporary, knowledgeable staff of Personnel Administrators. Dr. Bushnell willed it into being and made use of its strengths. Jack Weinstein and his associates planned and implemented it systematically and with verve. They have also documented its design and operating features so that others may adopt it in whole or in part.

Its costs spring from the same sources: there is almost no involvement with outside groups because the ties to the central administration are so tight. This restricts expanding the legitimacy of the AIP over time and may shorten its life-span. Cooperation with California State University is excellent, yet there is not a clear demarcation of effort and HUSD takes on or preempts teaching tasks that might be done better by professors. Nor have professors been drawn upon for program evaluation or for principal selection assessment.

As a result, program content is long on personnel and operations administration and short on curriculum and instructional features, though the latter are not absent altogether. Above all, lacking widened co-participation and independent review or advice, the AIP can become subject to two serious internal flaws.

It can devolve over time toward favoritism in the "pre-selection" of intern candidates, leading to later errors in principal selection judgments. Secondly, its evaluation feedback mechanisms are weak because Cabinet members learn how interns are performing but interns do not often learn from them in turn. Hence, the learning guidance can become distorted or uncertain.

These are reducible costs. HUSD has "a better idea" and has put it to work. It is capable of improving its own design and other school districts can adopt it and make changes of their own. The better idea is that rationality can be introduced into the preparation and selection of educational leaders for the principalship.

Chapter 5

The Administrative Training Program of the Montgomery County Public School System, Maryland[1]

Introduction

In our search for school districts actively engaged in efforts to improve procedures for selecting principals through the use of internships, several informed specialists in educational administration suggested that the Montgomery County Public School System (MCPS) of Maryland merited direct examination as a district investing in an innovative and excellent internship program of its own devising.

This chapter describes part of the Administrative Training Program of the MCPS. The part treated in greatest detail is that which pertains to selecting and training interns destined to become school principals. Administrative training activities in MCPS include many other elements, a few of which are referred to in this report. In order to provide for brevity, however, we refer to intern selection and training as *the* Administrative Training Program (ATP) throughout this report.

In this chapter, we first describe the historical context of MCPS; second, its approach to leadership training and selection in general; third, the administrative internship program itself and certain other aspects of administrator training in MCPS; and finally, weaknesses and dilemmas of the MCPS program, and its special successes.

---

[1] This chapter was coauthored by Karolyn K. Arnold, Administrative Program Coordinator of MCPS. Descriptions of Phase I, Phase II, the Administrative Internship Program, and the Assessment Center were written by Ms. Arnold. Other portions of this report were written by Robert A. Dentler of Abt Associates.

Historical Context

MCPS's history during the twentieth century breaks readily into two phases. The first is summarized neatly by the unbroken superintendency of Edwin W. Broome, who presided for 36 years (1917-1953) over the gradual development of a fairly traditional rural county public school district--traditional because it compared rather closely with similar county systems emerging in that era throughout the Border States and the South, covering a large land area dotted with small villages and a few exurban and suburban localities along the edges of the great urban center of Washington, D.C., and traditional because it was de jure segregated by race and sharply differentiated as to instructional emphasis between its most rural and most suburban locations.

The second period began with the racial desegregation of the Washington, D.C. public schools, the rapid suburbanization of the Washington and Baltimore metropolitan region, and the buildup of public investments in public education coincident with the outmovement from the cities of tens of thousands of middle and upper middle income households. MCPS matured into the post-Sputnik period of program innovations and reforms, plant expansion, and staff recruitment. During the 1963-1973 period, it climaxed this stage of development by emerging as one of the nation's largest districts, with a peak enrollment of 126,000 students, and with an earned reputation as one of the nation's best managed, staffed, and financed public school districts. Fueling this was the rise of Montgomery County to its place as one of the five wealthiest counties in the nation. Wealth alone is seldom sufficient however. The distinction achieved by MCPS was enabled not only by ample resources but by active public involvement in supporting the quest for educational quality and by intelligent board choices in the appointment of key administrators, among them, Taylor Whittier and Homer Elseroad.

Whittier's major strategy for district improvement, correlative with his program of plant and transportation expansion, was investment in staff development. He experimented with collaborative approaches to training with the University of Maryland, whose flagship campus is located nearby, and with such federal agencies as the U.S. Office of Education, the National Science Foundation, and the National Institute of Health. As these experiments continued, MCPS perfected its own intramural capabilities to design and implement staff development. Its Office of Personnel, under the leadership of Edward Andrews, now the MCPS superintendent, generated a Department of Staff Development as one of three large units to manage a sophisticated and pioneering approach to personnel administration.

By the late 1960's, MCPS became the first and only school district in Maryland to be authorized to give college credits for its own inservice training programs and even to award the equivalent of a master's degree. By the late 1970's, MCPS had in operation a virtually complete personnel testing, selection, training, career guidance, and promotion system which encompassed all levels of staff from bus drivers and custodians, to clerks and school secretaries, to teachers and line as well as staff administrators. The personnel management system was articulated with board-approved criteria for performance, with supervisory and evaluative subsystems, and with public accountability procedures.

Superintendent Elseroad proposed expansion of an internship program for administrators in 1970. The board approved it as a permanent ingredient in that year. Such a program had been evolving for five years but Elseroad made it permanent by inventing an arrangement to finance it with the difference between an intern's salary as a regular teacher and the salary that would have been paid for appointment of a regular assistant principal. This policy was linked with the more general view of systemwide staff development as a substantial personnel benefit, as the inservice training courses became more elaborate and frequent and were provided free to eligible personnel of the district.

Whittier, Elseroad, and Andrews all maintained close fidelity to a corollary of staff development during the years from 1960 through 1982: If candidates for hire are carefully assessed before initial appointment, and if they are drawn from a large pool of applicants eager to gain positions in an exceptionally reputable district, then continuity and security can be achieved. As a result, MCPS suffered only one teachers strike between 1960 and 1982. Until 1981, the Montgomery County Education Association (MCEA) represented both teachers and administrators; and its leadership behaved in the tradition of a professional association rather than a union in many of its transactions. Even when enrollments began to decline significantly after 1975, continuity and security were preserved. Some 31 teachers were laid off in 1980 as the board moved to go from the seven to the six period school day~~, but~~ this was the first and only reduction in force MCPS staff experienced between 1960 and 1981. In 1982, four teachers in health education were laid off.

As Dr. Stephen Rohr, Director of Personnel Services, explained about the underlying approach of MCPS, "We have a great big bag of tricks we use in order to preserve stability while managing the enrollment decline." Administrators or supervisors may request teaching assignments for at least one year at their salary level as administrators. After 25 years of service or by age 55, an employee can request a position of reduced responsibility but at the same pay for no more than three years. Currently, in order to protect the current administrative and supervisory staff, MCPS has a partial freeze on regular appointments and puts many new staff into *acting* positions only for one to two years so that the headquarters Appointments Committee can plan ahead sensibly and with flexibility.

What is important is that for two decades, at least, MCPS has gone to great lengths to *avoid* laying anyone off. The County is comparatively recession-proof because of its very close proximity to the seat of federal government. Its own tax base is extraordinarily favorable, and the County Board and Executive set the fiscal terms for MCPS, with input from the Board of Education. The County Council has never cut the district budget severely or precipitously. What is even more important than the policies and security-providing provisions of MCPS is the social fact that teachers, office staff, and administrators *believe* that the district will make this conserving effort and will make it successfully over the long term.

For these reasons, the ATP should be examined as part of a more comprehensive and pervasive framework of dependable resource allocations, high public involvement in district policy affairs (Superintendent Andrews estimated the Board met some 200 times during 1981-1982), strong administrative management, staff development based on deep and extensive inservice training and supervision at all levels, and on employment continuity and security. These conditions may not all be necessary for the adoption of a similar approach to internships, but they certainly facilitate success.

Leadership Training and Selection

The next three sections describe the three major parts of the staff development and selection approach used by MCPS. The first is a Leadership Training Program. This consists of two courses of interaction termed Phases I and II. The second is the Administrative Internship Program, and the third is the Assessment Center for Principal Candidates conducted by the system.

Phase I of Leadership Training

"Phase I: Career Development for Leadership" is a course of study designed to serve primarily a career information function for potential, aspiring administrators. Phase I is a non-credit, 10-session, weekly course conducted after work hours for approximately 50 persons who usually hold the position of teacher, department head, or specialist. It seeks to provide relevant data, information and experiences to be used in conjunction with other factors (personal aspirations, educational background, experience, self-analysis, etc.) in helping participants to make career decisions.

The five objectives are as follows:

1. To provide information with reference to career opportunities within the school system;
2. To provide opportunities for self-assessment relative to leadership potential;
3. To provide information with reference to others' views (those of administrative and supervisory personnel who serve as observers) regarding participant's leadership potential;
4. To provide experience through the task (small group problem solving process) and simulated interview sessions that may be helpful in future, actual task work and/or interview settings;
5. To provide information relative to career planning.

Observers, interviewers, and peers (participants' supervisors/ principals--optional) are asked to base their evaluations on the following competencies:

1. Interpersonal skills
2. Communication and conceptual skills
3. Group leadership skills

Data, based on evaluations, are systematically collected and organized so that at the end of the program participants will have received information on each of the categories listed above and a rank-ordered score for each of the evaluation activities. These data are intended to afford all participants an opportunity to view how others judged their skills and to see how well they fared with respect to the other participants.

Program activities designed to meet the objectives of Phase I are as follows:

1. Self-assessment and Job Awareness Sessions: During these sessions, participants complete a variety of self-assessment inventories to help them become more aware of certain aspects of their leadership potential and style; also, MCPS personnel representatives and others present and discuss selection procedures and career opportunities within the system. In addition, participants have the option of asking their principals to rate their leadership potential, using a format provided by the program coordinator.

2. Group Task Session: During this session, participants are divided into small groups to work on a timely administrative problem. Each work group is observed by two school-based administrators who then evaluate and rank order participants. The groups may be leaderless; or each person, in turn, may be selected to act as leader of the group for a different problem.

3. Simulated Interviews: The simulated employment interviews are conducted in those areas of interest expressed by participants. A range of administrative/supervisory personnel are asked to conduct interviews and then evaluate and rank the participants.

4. Feedback Session: During this session, participants review an individual data summary sheet. Included in this sheet are scores based on evaluations from the observers of the task session, the interviewers, and peers. Individual conferences may be scheduled for additional discussion of personal concerns.

5. Career Planning Sessions: During these sessions, individuals hear speakers and participate in a number of activities that focus on various aspects of career planning, such as information interviews, additional training or retooling, and resume writing.

Phase I is not designed to be an intensive training program, a part of the selection process, a guarantee of an appointment, or a requirement for an appointment. Rather, the course is designed to provide a base of awareness so that the participants may make decisions regarding administration as a career. About ninety percent of the participants felt that there was ample justification for and great value in the program and rated it as "highly effective" in the most recent (1980) evaluation.

Phase II

Phase I is a prerequisite for Phase II. Members of Phase I may opt to enroll in "Phase II: Introduction to Administrative Leadership," a three-credit, 18-week inservice course conducted after work hours and designed to provide participants with the following opportunities:

1. To learn more about the roles and responsibilities of those in administrative and supervisory positions in the school system;
2. To learn about administrative problems and issues in the school system;
3. To explore and study concepts, theories, and models relating to leadership/administration;
4. To develop skills useful for administration/leadership positions.

Drawing from selected readings and using a variety of speakers, films, small group discussions and simulated exercises, participants examine many aspects of the administrative role. In addition to providing opportunities for participants to meet with school system administrators, the course incorporates the following topics and themes: the nature of management; decision-making/problem-solving; motivation; leadership styles; time management; sex roles in management; assertiveness training for management; conflict management; power and authority; panels of administrative interns, assistant principals, principals; and interpersonal communication.

For example, the agenda of activities for one of the sessions on "Interpersonal Communication" included the following objectives:

1. To increase knowledge of interpersonal communication concepts;
2. To increase awareness of one's own style of communication;
3. To increase skills in identifying effects of barriers to communication and one-way and two-way communication.

This same agenda also included the following activities:

1. Introduction/Overview by program coordinator;
2. Assessment questionnaire on communication terms (with answers on back) taken individually by participants for self-assessment;
3. Lecture/Discussion on the concept of feedback and effective communication by program coordinator or guest speaker;
4. Barriers to communication exercise in which participants are divided into small groups of 5-6 people, job-different. One dyad in each group sits back to back and is observed by the remainder of the group as one of the pair gives directions to the other (who cannot communicate in any way) to assemble a puzzle in which the pieces are the same shape but different colors. After ten minutes, two-way communication is allowed for the next ten minutes. The observers provide feedback. The small groups discuss the effects, advantages and disadvantages, of one-way and two-way communication. The total group then discusses implications of the learnings.

5. Paraphrasing. After reading a handout on the art of paraphrasing, participants watch a film in which they identify barriers to and skills of paraphrasing. They are grouped into triads, job-alike, and are involved in a round-robin exercise in which two people conduct a discussion on a controversial subject (sample topics are provided) and practice paraphrasing during the conversation. The third person is the observer who records information on an observation sheet. They switch roles until everyone has assumed each role. They then give feedback to each other about the effects of paraphrasing.

Thus, Phase II has two major components--theory and practice. While based on administrative theories, this course provides participants with varied opportunities to apply the concepts to real situations, to build skills through practice sessions, and to work in groups of varying size and composition. In the current evaluation (1980), the Phase II program was given a "highly effective" rating by 97 percent of the participants.

Administrative Internship Program

Procedures for applying for the administrative internship, which is an intensive, on-the-job training program for prospective principals, are usually announced in the early fall in one of the weekly information bulletins sent to all personnel. Currently, completion of Phases I and II is recommended but is not required. Applicants undergo a "book rating" whereby the deputy superintendent, the executive assistant to the superintendent, and the associate superintendents review material for each candidate and give a one (top) to four (low) ranking based on degrees, experiences, skills as noted in a mandated resume format, certification, references, and evaluations. Then, the top candidates are invited to the Administrative Competence Sessions, which are an intensive observation and assessment of the candidates' interpersonal skills, communication and conceptual skills, and group leadership skills. The assessors consist of administrative and supervisory personnel, such as associate superintendents, principals, directors and supervisors.

Although the specific activities are currently under review for possible revision, the ones used in the past have been: (1) small group problem-solving task, (2) individual interview, and (3) written task. Candidates are given points for their performances on each of the activities and are then ranked. Names of the top persons are placed on "the administrative intern list" for two years after the system's Appointments Committee, composed of the superintendent, deputy superintendent, executive assistant to the superintendent, area associate superintendents, and director and assistant director of personnel (non-voting), has determined the number based on future projected needs of the system. When an opening for an assistant principal occurs in a school, the decision is made by the superintendent concerning placement of a current assistant principal or an administrative intern in that position. If an intern opening is set, selected persons from the list are interviewed by a panel; then one person is selected to participate in the administrative internship program.

Each intern, serving as assistant principal for one year, experiences a wide range of activities which will prepare the intern for the role of principal. The scope of the intern's responsibilities includes the following areas: instructional program, staff, pupil personnel, management, community involvement and professional growth. The principal to whom the intern has been assigned is responsible for the allocation of duties similar to those performed by an assistant principal. The principal is also the primary trainer and supervisor of the intern. Since these tasks and activities in which the intern is engaged help to determine the skills which she develops, the principal is expected to share all aspects of the principalship with the intern so that the intern is exposed to the total operation of a school.

Monthly seminars are a major component of the internship program. The intern conducts these seminars with her supervisory team, which consists of a central office associate superintendent, area office associate superintendent, representative from the Department of Staff Development, and a university representative or outside consultant (depending upon whether the intern is receiving university credits toward a doctorate or inservice credits). At each meeting, the intern presents an analysis of a log of daily activities and discusses a selected activity analysis that deals with an issue such as supervision of instruction, pupil personnel, or community and parent involvement as it has contributed to growth and on which the intern seeks guidance. These seminars provide important feedback for the intern. The team's role is to provide support, guidance, and evaluation (interim and final) of the intern. The supervisory team has the opportunity to study the intern's on-the-job performance, thereby becoming acquainted with the strengths and weaknesses of the candidate. The team assists the intern and principal in assessing the intern's performance as well as helps design additional experiences and determines more effective ways of carrying out current responsibilities. As part of this team, the Department of Staff Development representative plays a special facilitative role during the monthly meetings by acting as an advocate for the intern and as a group process observer. Finally, the internship provides participants with an opportunity to experience school administration before making a final career choice.

While the performance and analysis of local school duty assignments constitute the main thrust of the internship training activities, the Department of Staff Development provides other experiences to give the intern a broader perspective regarding educational leadership. While the intern is paid on the teacher's salary scale for the year, the difference between this amount and the salary of an assistant principal is used for additional instructional programs and resources for the intern. After a needs assessment, training activities are planned that feature either the extension of knowledge about the school system or the development of skills and knowledge in educational management, leadership, and supervision. Opportunities may consist of specially designed training programs on school law, finances/budget or teacher supervision; group field trips or retreats; individual visits to other schools or school systems; opportunity for individual assistance by consultants to assist with unique training needs; and participation in workshops offered by universities and consulting companies. Upon successful completion of the program, the intern is interviewed for an assistant principal position as soon as an appropriate one becomes available.

Assessment Center for Principal Candidates

Candidates for school principal are observed and reviewed through an assessment center, which is a useful tool in identifying and selecting school principals. Candidates are invited to the center after a review of their credentials, recommendations and personnel folders by the system's Appointments Committee. The center is conducted for an intensive, two-day period, usually at a local site. Each candidate participates in five exercises designed to give him an opportunity to demonstrate specific competencies needed by effective principals. Using information from the research, input from practicing principals, position job descriptions and personnel evaluation forms for principals, five areas that reflect specific skills and performance competencies were selected for assessment during the program. The areas are:

1. Skills in group leadership and problem solving;
2. Supervisory skills in analyzing classroom teacher behavior and conducting subsequent conferences with teachers;
3. Oral presentation skills;
4. Written communication skills;
5. Organization and management skills.

Throughout the program, the behavior of the candidate is observed and assessed by evaluators who include top executives and practicing principals of the school system. At the end of each exercise, these evaluators complete rating sheets on the candidate. Each evaluator is scheduled to observe each candidate in at least two exercises. After the activities have been completed, the individual rating forms are tabulated and summarized by each exercise. These ratings, based on 200 different competencies, are used by the Appointments Committee to screen out some of the candidates. Each candidate is given the opportunity to discuss the results and recommended training programs for individual growth in an individual interview conducted by the director of personnel services.

Shape of the ATP[2]

MCPS is one of the nation's twenty largest public school districts: It takes more than an hour to drive from one boundary to the other; it hosts over 92,100 students; it operates 160 school facilities; and it maintains a staff of about 11,500 personnel. As such, the district operates coherently and with exceptionally high quality because it is organized around the principles of modern personnel management. These include great investments in staff development.

From the points of view of every respondent, initial selectivity, career path guidance, training, and competitive assessment have been combined into an inclusive, challenging, and worthwhile upward mobility path for teachers who aspire toward leadership roles. The ATP, in other words, is neither special nor remarkable when viewed from within MCPS; rather, it is one among many comparable pathways to heightened proficiency and increased income. It has taken on greater importance in recent years, however, for reasons noted by Deputy Superintendent Harry Pitt. He believes the marketplace for locating educational talent has changed radically over two decades. "We once had five applicants for six jobs," he said, "and we had to make many compromises with quality. Now we are choosing one teacher or one administrator from among hundreds of applicants, and our selection and training procedures help us to hit well about 95 percent of the time."

The internship is conceived by most of those interviewed as the point where a very large funnel narrows sharply into a small neck. Those chosen have already established a high performance record as teachers or lower level supervisory staff members. They all hold masters degrees and some have doctorates (from a variety of universities). They have usually done outstandingly in the Phase I and II courses, and they have demonstrated their skills in the assessment activities with distinction. Getting to the point of internship is regarded by most of those interviewed as an intensely competitive process.

---

[2] This and remaining sections were written by Dentler, based on his interviews.

The internship year is dense with both didactic learning occasions and informally arranged self-study options. Learning progress and leadership potential are appraised after six months in an interim evaluation and then again at the end of the year. The final evaluation becomes a primary document for review by the Appointments Committee in deciding upon placement as acting assistant principal or assistant principal.

Everyone interviewed agreed that the strength of the internship experience is taken chiefly from the intern's repeated interaction with members of the supervisory teams, useful as the training and self-study opportunities are. It is through encounters with the supervisory team whose members include the supervising principals as well as some members of the Appointments Committee, that the intern becomes socialized to administration while the Committee has time to build a deep, extended familiarity with the judgment and character of the intern as a future leader.

Weaknesses and Dilemmas

The considerable power of the ATP springs from the mutual confidence that builds up between veteran administrators and upcoming interns. Both sets of participants believe in the efficacy and the fairness of the process. The senior veterans are confident that they are discovering high potential for leadership and safeguarding against mediocrity, and interns and graduates are prone to trust in the wisdom and equity of the veterans.

All selection and training designs have weaknesses, however, and most come up against situationally induced dilemmas over time. In my opinion, the single most vital weakness in the design derives from its near-total reliance on the judgments of senior administrators within MCPS. Even the one outside consultant member of supervisory teams tends to be a retired headquarters or area office administrator. The ATP is devoid of contribution from such stakeholders as board members, community leaders, business or government experts, parents, teachers, and students. This circumstance gives the total ATP great efficiency of operations and strengthens the consensual nature of socialization and selection. It does this at the possible expense of greater validity and of pluralistic enrichment of both training content and selection judgments. Opening participation outward in a huge, otherwise highly participative district, however, might prove cost-ineffective as well as threatening to the highly pitched cohesiveness of management in times when stability is hard to achieve.

That cohesiveness is the most striking characteristic of those interviewed. Veteran administrators, newly appointed principals and assistant principals, and interns do not come from similar backgrounds. They are not all natives of Montgomery County, though a few are, of course. They come from diverse socioeconomic origins. They are mixed by sex and race and religion. They come from private colleges and large public universities. They are diverse in their specialities: mathematics, science, history, psychology, elementary teaching, career education and work-study, and physical education, for example. There has been a clear operating assumption that leadership is widely dispersed across all categorical boundaries. For all of this, and for all of their manifest pride in their individuality, the new generation of principals-in-the-making mirrors the values, norms, and rhetoric of the senior administrators at MCPS headquarters.

The interns and recently appointed line administrators have obvious attributes of educational leadership. They are poised, socially responsive, highly articulate, and analytically incisive. They are not "yes-men," and their concerns for one facet or another of substantive efforts vary widely. At the same time, they are headquarters-oriented and socialized. Counter-cyclical and divergent thinking were not displayed. Criticism tends to be self-directed. Competitive striving is valued highly as is control, orderliness, and determined optimism. A disposition toward direct candor seemed reserved in some ways to Superintendent Andrews who is, however, acutely sensitive to the issue of preserving continuity of leadership.

The gravest, situationally imposed dilemma facing the ATP is the one generated by declining enrollments. Some 17 schools will close in 1982-1983, and others were closed or changed in grade usage between 1978 and 1981. The funnel of administrator selection is therefore clogged.

The surface problem created by the clog is that interns cannot be placed optimally. They must fill vacancies as these arise. They also may not be optimally supervised by the resident principal. This is all in contrast to the 1970-1978 period when assignments could be arranged more selectively by the Appointments Committee. Today, some supervisory teams have their hands full with the tasks of guiding the supervising principals and with reappraising evidence about on-the-job performance accumulated during assignments.

Considerable ingenuity is exercised in order to reduce the impact of difficulties that arise from less than ideal placements for interns. For example, internships are sometimes delayed and occasionally are split into two parts. Mutual trust facilitates these and other adjustments and helps to reduce the scale of the difficulties.

This is but the surface. Underlying it is the deeper challenge of what to do when the waiting list grows heavy with excellent younger administrators and the list of surplus older administrators enlarges. While I was waiting to interview Superintendent Andrews, for instance, a jolly clown in full regalia delivered vast bunches of balloons and messages from parents at one school who were lobbying to have their acting principal made permanent for next year. Dr. Rohr mentioned a letter writing campaign by parents from a different school calling for the same action. In a third case, a new principal is leading a campaign to prevent the closing of his school.

Andrews, Pitt, and Rohr expressed equal confidence about their ability to solve this problem. Others were less sanguine, however. One veteran at headquarters said, "The ATP is hanging by a thread. Placements are getting more problematical each year and the competitive funnel is narrowing severely." An early retirement policy would be costly to implement because some veteran administrators in the system earn in excess of $50,000 a year. Attrition to other districts has slowed down. There is a cluster of 55 to 63 year olds verging on retirement, but the cluster may not move out fast enough to keep hope and trust at high levels among the assistant principals on the line and among the interns in the neck of the funnel. Several interviewees were worried that "MCPS may not stay on the cutting edge of excellence quite as much as it used to be."

Some 70 percent of MCPS's teachers have 15 years or more of employment in the district. Many interns have been drawn from the ranks of those with fewer years than this. They represent a talent reserve of crucial significance for the future vitality of the district, yet they cannot "warm the bench" indefinitely and remain as optimistic as they are at present. The same reserve contains the first large group of women and racial minorities, moreover, who expect to fulfill their aim at attaining principalships. A few are beginning to give more than side glances to beckoning opportunities in private sector management or technical positions.

The Appointments Committee has "a bag of tricks" big enough to contain this logistical challenge. It has experimented earnestly with what it calls its "80-72 policy," for example, of transfer to reduced responsibility while maintaining pay levels for no more than three years. Its advance planning resources are considerable when compared with other school districts we have studied. Nevertheless, the current Board is as conservative a body as MCPS has experienced in twenty years, and next fall's election could intensify that body's determination to "cut frills and return to basics."

Commentary on Content

One of the issues common to most administrative internship programs is that of content: What is taught and what is learned? The MCPS program is more explicit than many others in this regard. Just as the district has defined performance standards for teachers, so it has outlined for evaluative purposes five domains of effectiveness for assistant principals and principals. These are instructional program, staff, pupil personnel, management, and community involvement. The import of each domain is expressed repeatedly throughout inservice courses, supervisory team sessions, retreats, and ratings by supervisors.

Most of those interviewed believe the supervisory team meetings each month are *the* most valuable part of the internship, yet they express frustration over their sense that there are too few sessions and that the sessions are too brief. The teams comprise highly paid senior officers with many competing demands for their time, however, so the time they can give is seriously limited.

The retreats offset some of this limitation. Interns find them to be of great value as occasions for studying with senior officers, for building peer relations, and for making essential social comparisons. What is more, the didactic elements of retreats are prepared with great care by the Department of Staff Development to incorporate needs and learning interests expressed by interns.

Listening to interns and recent graduates and again in reviewing program content, I was fascinated by an apparent discrepancy: Instructional leadership receives first priority in the ATP so far as agenda and written criteria assert. Yet most of the teaching and learning, whether formal or informal through role modelling, concentrates on managerial aspects of the other domains and on interpersonal style, according to those interviewed. Some interns say they balance this by virtue of their own professional preoccupations with one or another content area of instructional improvement, and most have real expertise in their specialties.

Most interns and graduates of the ATP who reported a lack of curricular and instructional leadership content said that they adjust for the imbalance by continuing studies on their own in content areas, both inservice and university-based. They take pride in designing their own pathways and they favor the ATP norm which stresses the great importance of personal initiative.

It seemed to me that the latent function of emphasis upon management and process as opposed to instructional leadership is to amplify the priority given to management skills within MCPS headquarters. There is not only a working assumption that interns are *already* accomplished educators, there is also a resocializing toward the pragmatics of district maintenance, spokesmanship, logistics, and resource justification, which tends to compete with the concern with content.[3]

This latent function, if it exists, also supports the trend toward increasing role differentiation between faculty and administrators, a trend carried by rising unionism, accountability and evaluation mechanics, and growing complexities in articulating school management with rapid changes in the economy and the policy of the larger community. MCPS thus does not divorce management from the design of instruction. Indeed, it makes multiple efforts to tie the two activity subsystems together.

As a result, some otherwise obvious needs get overlooked. MCPS is situated in the heartland of the nation's military-high technology complex, yet micro-computer education has just begun to penetrate the curriculum. One of MCPS's high schools had only one micro-computer in 1981 and it was reserved for exercises in advanced mathematics courses.[4]

One recent graduate said, "The ATP is much like an M.B.A. degree program. It is superb as such but its weakness is like the weakness of our district overall: We are not well equipped to supervise or to guide instruction. Our teacher evaluation procedures don't help in this. They widen the gulf and they also lead to end-of-year blanket judgments." A few interns and new appointees make good use of instructional expertise of their own and find ways to mobilize faculty around their specialties, but much more remains to be done. One new principal said she found headquarters staff were very receptive to her innovative initiatives in this respect, so the channel for change is open.

---

[3] Senior central office administrators regard this paragraph as a mistaken interpretation. They view the content emphasis on instructional leadership as very strong. They also point to several formal training programs for administrators and supervisors on instructional leadership, implementation of curriculum, and effective teaching. Quite a few interns and recent graduates disagree, however.

[4] Interns are currently getting training on computer literacy and management, however. In addition, the budget passed in May 1982 provides funds for substantially expanding MCPS's Computer Related Instructional Unit, and most schools now have computers.

Equity

Superintendent Andrews and his Appointments Committee use the ATP as a means for affirmative action. They do not emphasize specific performance scores during the internship because they are determined to find and appoint women and ethnic minority candidates once assessment leads to a determination of adequate preparation and ability.[5] Thus, the ATP is more than an equal opportunity program. It results in equalization of principalship appointments from among those who rank high in the training sequences.

The achievement is dramatic for women. Six women now serve as junior high and middle school principals. Many more are in charge of elementary schools, and two have become high school principals. A woman is associate superintendent in charge of curriculum, budget, and facility planning, and one serves as an area associate superintendent.

The record for racial minorities also shows substantial equity gains. In the 1975-76 school year, 13 percent of the new administrative and supervisory appointees were from racial minorities, and during the 1981-82 school year, this proportion rose to 24 percent. Dr. Rohr takes pride in noting that scrutiny of MCPS's equity practices has been intense for a decade, yet, "We have never lost a case or even come close."

Final Note

Principal selection within MCPS is greatly enhanced by the ATP. The internship program is quite old, going back in fact to the late 1950's when some of its basic features were first introduced. The ATP will not fade away because it is viewed by the Board as a means of conserving and upgrading leadership, although it may undergo many changes during the late 1980's as retrenchment pressures continue to build.

---

[5] This is but one among several reasons why scores are dropped from the record when a candidate has been placed on the list. Another includes separating staff development from appointment.

The ATP itself is made possible by a combination of circumstances: district wealth, longevity of top leadership, a concerted and longstanding policy of modern staff development, and giftedness among staff which is valued and sought after. One other, more subcultural feature seems to make the ATP highly worthwhile: Parents and board members are highly participative and some board members are active as what one highly informed source called "quasi-administrators." Yet, except as provided for in The Public School Laws of Maryland, these and other influentials in the County do not seek to determine hiring and promotions of personnel. The influence is targeted not at appointments but at the content and quality of programs and services.

MCPS thus becomes a kind of ideal case for study of what happens when the most enduring principles of public management are actually given a chance to be implemented. Learning outcomes for students may not be enhanced in a direct or measurable way, but the administrative context in which the teaching and learning environment is situated is greatly strengthened. In addition, public confidence in public education is maintained and program operations are facilitated by a climate of trust. Most immediately, building principals and assistant principals become a cadre of enthusiastic, self-confident, and adaptive instructional leaders.

CHAPTER 6

The National Association of Secondary School Principals' Assessment Center in Howard County, Maryland

Introduction

No exploration of promising approaches for improving principal selection is complete without a look at the assessment center option. Long established in business and industry as a tool for identifying managerial talent, an assessment center

> consists of a standardized evaluation of [assessee] behavior based on multiple judgments. Multiple trained observers and techniques are used. Judgments about behaviors are made, in part, from specially developed assessment simulations. These judgments are then pooled by the assessors at an evaluation meeting during which all relevant assessment data are reported and discussed, and the assessors agree on the evaluation of the dimensions [being assessed] and an overall evaluation that is made. The essence of the technology and its most distinguishing feature is the foundation of the assessment in the measurement of multiple characteristics of the individual using multiple measurement tools and involving at least some observation of an individual's behavior by multiple observers. (Williamson and Schaalman, 1981)

During the 1970s, the assessment center approach to personnel identification and selection began moving into education. Early in the decade, a number of school districts (and universities) attempted independent development of assessment centers for managerial selection. In more recent years, a number of consulting firms that specialize in developing assessment centers for industry have begun to work with some of the larger school districts to develop local centers.[1]

---

[1] Chief among these are Assessment Designs Incorporated of Orlando, Florida, and Developmental Dimensions International of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Probably the most comprehensive, systematic, and potentially important attempt to bring the assessment center technique to bear on the selection of educational managers is that of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) of Reston, Virginia.[2] Since 1975, NASSP has been engaged in developing and pilot testing an assessment center model for use by school districts in selecting principals (or assistant principals). Under the leadership of Mr. Paul W. Hersey, NASSP's Director of Professional Assistance, the development of the NASSP Assessment Center has been thoroughly and carefully orchestrated to meet both the expressed needs of practitioners and rigorous psychometric standards. For instance, NASSP began its project by seeking technical advice and assistance from the American Psychological Association's (APA) Division of Industrial and Organizational Psychology. Through APA, NASSP obtained the ongoing planning and design assistance of industrial psychologists deeply immersed in this approach. Further, NASSP has resisted strong demand for widespread dissemination until extensive field testing to ascertain district needs and concerns is completed. (For instance, NASSP reports that over 200 requests for involvement in the pilot project have been received.)

By early 1976, the first NASSP Assessment Centers were in operation, and, by 1980, the number of pilot sites had grown to five school districts, all in the southeast within easy reach of NASSP assistance and monitoring. At this point, it was clear that the participating pilot districts were quite enthusiastic about the Assessment Center. District administrators, assessors, and those assessed frequently claimed both direct and secondary benefits from use of the technique. However, no empirical evaluation of the Center's effectiveness had as yet been conducted.

Hence, NASSP commissioned an independent, longitudinal validation study by a Michigan State University research team led by Dr. Neal Schmitt. The study is still in progress, with completion projected for August 1982.

---

[2] Much of the NASSP-related material in this chapter is taken from conversations with Paul Hersey, leader of the NASSP effort, and from two of his recent articles: "Good Schools Require Talented Leadership," Educational Leadership, Fall 1982; and "NASSP's Assessment Center," NASSP Bulletin, September 1977. We are indebted to both Mr. Hersey and to NASSP for their cooperation and assistance in making this chapter possible.

Preliminary results, however, are encouraging (Schmitt, et. al., 1981). For instance, the early findings show the NASSP Center to have high internal validity. In other words, assessors generally agree about participants' performance and are able to make meaningful distinctions among the various skills being assessed. Second, the NASSP Center's content validity is high. Administrators generally judge that the Center's exercises provide the necessary information on the skills assessed, and that these skills are indeed required by the principalship. Finally, the Center's criterion validity--or ability to predict subsequent job performance--is generally positive (although low, probably as a result of the small predictive validity sample available at the time of the preliminary report).[3]

Further development of the NASSP Assessment Center model has not awaited completion of the validation study, however. Interest and demand from the field have been too great, and have offered excellent opportunities to expand the test. In addition, NASSP has been responsive to practitioners' needs for additional refinement that have emerged as the field test has progressed.

In 1980, five more pilot sites were added; in 1981, three more; and in 1982, one more.[4] These newer sites are geographically diverse, and, together with the first sites, now provide demonstrations and tests of the model in all five major geographic areas of the country. Even more importantly, the last nine demonstrations include intermediate or regional units that serve several local school districts and state universities with major responsibilities for outreach, as well as a few individual school systems.

Most of the participating pilot sites are now of the first two types, for NASSP has found that organizations serving several local districts generally can make more cost-effective use of the Center than can most individual school systems (with the exception of very large, growing districts). In fact, NASSP anticipates that many of the smaller individual districts that are currently a part of the pilot may move in the direction of serving nearby districts once their local needs are largely met.

---

[3] In a recent conversation, Hersey noted that the final year of the validity study has found the Center's criterion validity to be notably higher (and still positive).

[4] One of the original five sites discontinued involvement, making a current total of 13 sites participating in the pilot test.

In addition, several pilot sites have moved in the direction of exploiting the Assessment Center's natural potential for staff development. In fact, interest in the staff development potential of the Center has been so great that it has led NASSP to incorporate this as a major thrust of its pilot testing and model development. For instance, in May, 1981, NASSP initiated a program with Far West Laboratory of San Francisco for the creation of developmental training packages for some of the various skills assessed by the center. And just recently NASSP elected to extend the pilot test for one more year to implement an Assessment Center Development Consortium for the purpose of developing additional training packages and strategies before releasing the Center model for widespread dissemination. (The Consortium, which includes Howard County is discussed in more detail later in this chapter.)

In sum, by the time the pilot project is completed and all is ready for widespread dissemination in 1983, the NASSP Assessment Center will have been rigorously validated and subjected to implementation testing in a variety of educational settings throughout the country. More than 300 assessors will have been trained, and more than 800 participants assessed. The model will also include an array of staff development materials and strategies keyed to the various skills assessed. And last but by no means least, the model will encompass a knowledge base about implementation issues, problems, and strategies.

Our goal in seeking the inclusion of the NASSP Assessment Center approach to principal selection in this study was not to evaluate either the NASSP model in particular or the concept of assessment centers in general. Rather, we sought to document this important innovation from the perspectives of both researchers and practitioners, particularly the latter. To accomplish this goal, we sought the assistance of Mr. Hersey, asking him not only to share information about the NASSP project but also to nominate three pilot districts for our research team to visit.

Of the nominations, we selected Howard County, Maryland, chiefly for two reasons. First, Howard County has been involved with the NASSP project since 1980. Hence, while implementation of the Howard County Center is virtually complete, the experiences of implementation and adoption are still very fresh, and provide many insights for other districts considering this option. Second, Howard County is in several ways (albeit not all) typical of many school districts today. Serving about 25,000 students, it combines the urban and the rural, the deeply traditional and the thoroughly modern. And, while not in severe decline as are many northeastern and midwestern districts, it is not experiencing rapid growth as are many Sunbelt districts. Finally, Howard County has a moderate annual turnover of school administrators (two to three a year at most), and a large pool of highly competent candidates to compete for these few available positions.

With Mr. Hersey's introduction, Howard County's Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Curriculum, Mr. Noel Farmer (who serves as Director of the Assessment Center) and Superintendent, Dr. Thomas Goedeke, welcomed our inquiry. Subsequently, Mr. Farmer and Dr. Lee Smith, Director of Staff Development and Co-Director of the Assessment Center, hosted our five-day visit to Howard County in late February, 1982.

In this chapter, we first describe the NASSP Assessment Center and its operation in Howard County; second, key contextual features of the district; third, special implementation issues that have arisen for Howard County as it has implemented the Center; fourth, perceptions of participants; and finally, the future and some costs and benefits of the Center in Howard County.

Description of the Assessment Center

One of the most notable characteristics of the NASSP Assessment Center model is that it is standardized for all adopting districts in both its basic technical operation and its key implementation requirements, with much emphasis given to the latter. As Exhibit 6-1 shows, the NASSP General Design Model not only specifies various technical features, but also addresses the local role responsibilities of the assessors, the place of the Center in the adopting district's administrative hierarchy, and the maintenance and distribution of assessment reports.

Adopting districts are allowed some leeway, as Exhibit 6-2 shows.[5] For instance, Howard County has chosen to have the Assistant Superintendent for School Curriculum and Instruction act as Center Director (with the Director of Staff Development acting as Co-Director), rather than a personnel administrator. In the context of the particular administrative structure of Howard County, district personnel feel that this gives the Center more visibility, and widely signals its burgeoning importance for both principal selection and staff development. NASSP's point is simply that (as the field testing has repeatedly shown) an appropriate, highly placed member of the district hierarchy must lead the implementation effort if it is to be successful.

Similarly, Howard County has made decisions about the distribution of the assessment reports (Item 7) that are appropriate to the way in which the Center fits into its own basic principal selection process (discussed in the following section of this chapter). Again, NASSP's point is simply that the assessment reports must be used by the district if implementation is to succeed, as the field tests have also shown.

To ensure integrity of both the technical and implementation features of the model, NASSP requires that adopting districts enter into a contractual agreement. As Exhibit 6-3 shows, this agreement addresses both technical (Item 2c) and implementation (Item 2a) particulars. And, for the latter, it once again emphasizes the necessity of top-level support and backing and prompt utilization (Item 2e).

---

[5] Howard County anticipates making some changes in this Design Model after the transition phase is completed and all its eligible candidates have been assessed, particularly in Items 10 and 11. Anticipated changes are discussed later in this chapter.

Exhibit 6-1

NASSP ASSESSMENT CENTER

General Design Model

1. The objective of the NASSP Assessment Center is to assess the potential of candidates for assistant principal and principal positions.

2. The pool of eligible participants for the Center includes all current district employees who have attained (or will soon attain) the legal qualifications and credentials for the position of assistant principal or principal.

3. A team of six assessors for each scheduled Center will include principals and other district administrators. An administrator in the district's personnel and/or staff development office will act as the director of the Assessment Center program.

4. Twelve participants will be assessed at each Center.

5. Assessment reports will be written by the assessors with the assistance of the director of the Assessment Center. Each assessment report will contain:

   (a) A summary of the participant's strengths and improvement needs.

   (b) Developmental suggestions for the participant.

   (c) A recommendation from the assessor team as to whether the participant should be placed as an assistant principal or principal.

   A positive recommendation by the assessors will indicate that a Center participant is considered to have significant strengths overall and is likely to succeed as an assistant principal or principal. A participant who is not recommended by the assessors may, nevertheless, be placed in an administrative position if that individual has specific abilities which are required.

6. Each participant will receive a confidential feedback interview in which strengths and improvement needs are discussed. During this interview a copy of the assessment report will be provided to the participant.

7. An additional copy of the assessment report will be kept in the district's Assessment Center file for a period of 4-5 years. Besides the Assessment Center director and participant, the following persons will have access to this report: the superintendent, directors of instruction, and the principal or other supervisor under whom an administrative opening has occurred.

8. Center participants who perform poorly will not be disqualified for consideration for future job opportunities. Participants who request to be assessed a second time will be required to wait at least two years after their initial assessment.

9. Potential participants will be notified through posted announcements when Centers are to be held. Scheduling of Centers will be done irrespective of the occurrence of administrative openings.

Exhibit 6-2

THE HOWARD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM ASSESSMENT CENTER

Design Model

1. The primary objective of the Howard County Public School Assessment Center is to assess the potential of candidates for administrative assistant, assistant principal and principal positions.

2. The pool of eligible participants for the Center includes all current district employees who have met the Maryland State certification requirements for school administration (principal).

3. The Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Curriculum will act as the director of the Assessment Center program. The director of the Assessment Center will select a co-director for each Center. A team of six trained assessors will conduct each Center.

4. Twelve participants will be assessed at each Center.

5. Assessment reports will be written by the assessors with the assistance of the director of the Assessment Center. Each assessment report will contain:

   a. A summary of the participant's strengths and improvement needs.

   b. Developmental suggestions for the participant.

   c. Overall performance rating.

   An average or higher rating by the assessors will indicate that a Center participant is considered to have significant strength overall and is predicted to be successful if promoted as a school based administrator.

6. Each participant will receive a confidential feedback interview with the Center director in which strengths and improvement needs are discussed. During this interview a copy of the assessment report will be provided to the participant.

7. An additional copy of the assessment report will be kept in the district's Assessment Center file for a period of four to five years. In addition to the Assessment Center director and participant, the members on an interviewing team will be able to read the report if the candidate applies to be interviewed. The majority of each interviewing team will be composed of trained assessors. The report will not become a part of the personnel file.

8. Center participants who do not receive a rating of average or higher will not be disqualified for consideration for future job opportunities. Participants who request to be assessed a second time will be required to wait at least two years after their initial assessment.

9. Potential participants will be notified through posted announcements when Centers are to be held. Scheduling of Centers will be done irrespective of the occurrence of administrative openings.

10. A candidate's participation in the Assessment Center does not guarantee selection for an administrative position, now or in the future. A candidate's involvement in the Assessment Center does, however, indicate sincere interest in being considered for such a position. When a vacancy occurs, Assessment Center participants and other candidates will be considered upon receipt of application. Persons who do not participate in the Assessment Center may be considered as candidates to fill administrative vacancies. Since it is in the interest of the Howard County Public School System to use the best information available about each candidate to reach appropriate employment decisions, all persons interested in becoming a school administrator are strongly encouraged to apply for participation in the Assessment Center.

11. The Howard County Public School System will continue to use the current promotional policy #1414. The Assessment Center will be another data dimension in this process.

Exhibit 6-3

NASSP ASSESSMENT CENTER AGREEMENT

1. TERM OF AGREEMENT

This agreement for participation in the NASSP Assessment Center project, by and between the school district of ______________________________ (herein referred to as "District") and the National Association of Secondary School Principals (herein referred to as "NASSP"), shall be in effect for two (2) years: from ______________ through ______________.

2. CONDITIONS FOR PARTICIPATING

Pursuant to participating in the NASSP Assessment Center project, the District agrees to the following conditions:

a. The Board of Education of the District formally authorizes participation by designated personnel in the NASSP Assessment Center.

b. The District will designate a cadre of not less than eight (8) assessors to participate in the NASSP Assessment Center project. These assessors will be trained under the direction of NASSP, and the District will assume all expenses for travel, room, and board connected with the training of each assessor. The District will also pay a fee of $25 for each assessor trained, to cover the cost of an Assessor Handbook and other required materials.

c. The District will purchase from NASSP all specially prepared and/or copyrighted printed materials used in the District/NASSP Assessment Centers. (A cost sheet is attached to and made a part of this agreement, and these costs are subject to annual adjustments.)

d. The District will not reproduce, copy, or duplicate any documents used in the District/NASSP Assessment Center for distribution or sale (or both) to anyone (person, agency, or organization) outside of official school District Assessment Center personnel without the express and official permission of NASSP.

e. The District will implement an Assessment Center within eight (8) weeks of the time assessors are trained and approved by NASSP.

Date______________________________ ______________________________
Representing the District

____
Representing NASSP

NASSP's inclusion of these and other implementation features as part of the model itself has the effect of encouraging school districts to think carefully about their needs and whether they are most appropriately addressed by the Assessment Center--given district resources, philosophies, and general contextual constraints. It is one of the ironies of the education profession that there are "bandwagons" or fads that periodically sweep the field and then fade into oblivion or disrepute when they inevitably fail to live up to overdeveloped expectations. The very strength and attractiveness of the assessment center approach in general--its cohesiveness, precision, psychometric power, and intuitive "common sense" appeal--make it an excellent candidate for just such a fate.

Hence, NASSP has built into its Assessment Center model several early checkpoints (such as the contractual agreement) to stimulate users to examine their expectations closely. As NASSP's Center Director, Paul Hersey, commented, "It's not for everybody and we want them to think very carefully before they get into it."

For its part, prior to making the final decision to adopt Howard County investigated the Assessment Center closely, through both a study committee and exploratory meetings with NASSP. Describing the latter, one Howard County administrator noted, "Mr. Hersey really made us stop and think very carefully about exactly why we wanted the Center and how we were going to use it. He didn't try to control it--the policy decisions were all ours--but he did ask--and got us to ask ourselves--some pretty hard questions about what it was for, how it fit in, how we wanted to set it up, and how various groups might react to it. And this proved to be very helpful. I don't think we would have been as successful with it as we have if we had just jumped in. It's not the kind of thing you can just go out and order, like a textbook." Other Howard County staff echoed this, and stressed the importance of formulating clear goals and obtaining "a strong, deep organizational commitment" before implementation begins. As Assistant Superintendent Farmer said, "You're involving the lives of people [through the Assessment Center] in a deeper way than ever before. You can't have even a tinge of a cavalier attitude."

The basic technical features of the NASSP model are common to assessment centers in general. First, the Center is an *event*, not a place, and is conducted as frequently as the adopting district desires. For instance, Howard County presently conducts Centers three times a year. As increasing numbers of eligible staff are assessed, the district anticipates that it may cut back to twice-a-year Centers.

Each Center is conducted by a group of six highly trained assessors, whose charge it is to observe, measure and evaluate 12 candidates as they complete various exercises and simulations. Assessor training is crucial to the validity and reliability of the Center, for the scoring of the various exercises is behaviorally grounded, and standardized to a high degree of precision. In the NASSP model, assessors participate in a three-day (and evening) training session at NASSP offices in Reston, and are then monitored by an NASSP representative for at least the first two Centers they conduct. (Spot monitoring is done thereafter.)

Monitoring of the first two Centers that newly trained assessors conduct is considered by NASSP to be an integral part of assessor training. As Hersey commented, "You are not an accomplished assessor after three days and evenings of training. You have to actually go through a few Centers to get a full sense of what it's about. So for the first two Centers [each lasting five days] new assessors are monitored with immediate feedback [on their performance]." In addition, assessors must be *certified* by NASSP as having satisfactorily completed or "passed" the training before they may independently conduct Assessment Centers. It is worth noting that assessor trainees do not always pass.

Selection of the assessors is viewed as extremely important, both in terms of their local roles and their personal potential for becoming "good" assessors--they must be accurate, precise, and comfortable with a "behavioral evidence" approach to observation and evaluation of staff.[6] In addition, it is critical that assessor teams be balanced for race and sex. NASSP specifies that each team of six assessors must include both principals and district administrators, but does not specify which district administrators. Howard County has chosen to have 17 assessors trained, including principals at each level, top central administrative staff who are directly involved with principals and schools, and Personnel Office staff. For instance, all three Directors of School Administration (elementary, middle and high school) and the Director of Curriculum are trained assessors, as is the Director of Personnel.

---

[6] Since our field work was completed, NASSP has instituted preliminary screening of assessor nominees. Each nominee is interviewed personally by Hersey, who uses a structured interview protocol to determine whether the nominee's motivation and actual availability are sufficiently high. The assessor role is quite demanding--often more so than adopting organizations realize--and this interview serves to screen out nominees whose other role commitments are prohibitive.

Interestingly, Howard County took a risk in selecting its assessors solely on the basis of their role responsibilities and not on the basis of their entry-level support for the notion of an assessment center. By their own accounts, several of the assessors were "real doubters" and "skeptics" in the beginning, and undertook the training with considerable reservations about the workability and validity of the Center. For instance, several commented that they had had serious doubts about mixing levels of participants (elementary and secondary) in the Center, as Howard County planned to do from the beginning. Others commented that they initially "simply could not imagine how the Center could achieve objectivity in something as subjective as somebody's observation."

The district elected this strategy for two reasons. First, the top district leadership (and the study committee responsible for recommending the assessment center option) felt it essential to involve the key line administrators if the Center were to have real credibility. Second, everyone felt that if the "doubters" remained unconvinced even after more intimate exposure to the methodology, this would signal the possibility of serious difficulties in adoption and necessitate some rethinking.

The risk proved well worth the taking, for, by their own accounts, the "doubters" emerged from the training solidly convinced. As one noted, "It laid my doubts about mixing levels quickly to rest. It focuses on the universals of administration and staff promotion, and it really doesn't matter whether you're talking about elementary or middle or high schools."

(Those assessed are not quite as sanguine about this issue, however.) Other "doubters" repeatedly commented on the objectivity of the method, noting that, more so than they had ever experienced, the training focused on teaching assessors to observe behavior and build chains of evidence for later conclusions and evaluations. As one commented, "It opened up a whole new way of looking at and evaluating people for me in general. Even outside the Center now I find myself looking for evidence before I make a decision about somebody."

Almost without exception, the Howard County assessors we spoke with also commented on the rigor, intensity, and thoroughness of the training. The training did not entirely escape criticism, however. While the major concern expressed by most of our respondents was simply that they "wished there had been more time because there was so much to learn," a number expressed additional concerns. Chief among these was the perception that there is likely to be some decay in assessor skills over time due to the length of time between Centers, and that it would be helpful to have periodic refresher courses. As one assessors' commented, "You do get back into it because each assessor reviews all the materials prior to each Center and then the group of assessors gets together. But I always wonder if I've forgotten something and I think it would be helpful to go back maybe once a year for some refresher training." Still another respondent wondered if "perhaps assessors should be trained as regional or consortium assessors [so that they assess more frequently and don't] lose the skills if it's too long between Centers."

Since our field work, NASSP has addressed the decay issue in terms of both individual assessors and the Center in general by adopting an approach for annual reaccreditation of all NASSP Centers. Specifically, each adopting agency must substantiate and certify annually that it has met NASSP's Standards of Quality (contained in Appendix B). Failure to meet these standards results in withdrawal of NASSP accreditation, including withdrawal of copyrighted materials and the NASSP name. The Standards are comprehensive, and require that a one-day refresher course be given to all assessors who have not conducted a Center for six months or more.

Other informants criticized the training for specific weaknesses related to one or two particular exercises. For instance, as one noted, "There is no training in interviewing, yet the [personal] interview is so important." Interestingly, both the assessors and those assessed in Howard County seemed to regard the personal interview as one of the comparatively weaker exercises in general. Lack of specific training for assessors in interviewing skills may be the reason.[7]

At each Center, the six assessors evaluate each of the 12 participants on 12 skills dimensions, which are defined in Exhibit 6-4. These dimensions have been empirically determined and validated as important to the principalship. While all NASSP Assessment Centers evaluate all 12 of these dimensions, adopting districts may choose to weight them differently depending on local needs and philosophies. For instance, Howard County has chosen to give preeminence to five: (1) problem analysis; (2) judgment; (3) organizational ability; (4) leadership; and (5) sensitivity. Not only are these five most directly related to Howard County's vision of the principal's role, but they are also the "best measured" dimensions, in the district's estimation. Other adopting agencies may select other dimensions for emphasis, or chose to weight all 12 equally.

The exercises and simulations completed by the participants are designed to measure specific skills dimensions. Presently, there are six exercises, each of which measures at least six of the 12 skills dimensions. Further, with two exceptions (Range of Interests and Personal Motivation), each skills dimension is measured by at least two (and usually three to five) of the exercises.

The exercises themselves are closely guarded to protect the confidentiality and integrity of the Center. While entering candidates and outside observers may know that the simulations include such activities as a leaderless group activity, a fact-finding and stress test, paper-and-pencil

---

[7] Hersey notes that NASSP now devotes a full half-day of the assessor training to the personal interview, and includes interviewing techniques.

Exhibit 6-4

SKILLS TO BE ASSESSED

1.	PROBLEM ANALYSIS	Ability to seek out relevant data and analyze complex information to determine the important elements of a problem situation; searching for information with a purpose.
2.	JUDGMENT	Ability to reach logical conclusions and make high quality decisions based on available information; skill in identifying educational needs and setting priorities; ability to critically evaluate written communications.
3.	ORGANIZATIONAL ABILITY	Ability to plan, schedule, and control the work of others; skill in using resources in an optimal fashion; ability to deal with a volume of paperwork and heavy demands on one's time.
4.	DECISIVENESS	Ability to recognize when a decision is required (disregarding the quality of the decision) and to act quickly.
5.	LEADERSHIP	Ability to get others involved in solving problems; ability to recognize when a group requires direction, to effectively interact with a group to guide them to accomplish a task.
6.	SENSITIVITY	Ability to perceive the needs, concerns, and personal problems of others; skill in resolving conflicts; tact in dealing with persons from different backgrounds; ability to deal effectively with people concerning emotional issues; knowing what information to communicate and to whom.
7.	STRESS TOLERANCE	Ability to perform under pressure and during opposition; ability to think on one's feet.
8.	ORAL COMMUNICATION	Ability to make a clear oral presentation of facts or ideas.
9.	WRITTEN COMMUNICATION	Ability to express ideas clearly in writing; to write appropriately for different audiences--students, teachers, parents, et al.
10.	RANGE OF INTERESTS	Competence to discuss a variety of subjects--educational, political, current events, economic, etc.; desire to actively participate in events.
11.	PERSONAL MOTIVATION	Need to achieve in all activities attempted; evidence that work is important in personal satisfaction; ability to be self-policing.
12.	EDUCATIONAL VALUES	Possession of a well-reasoned educational philosophy; receptiveness to new ideas and change.

"in-basket" tasks dealing with school problems, and a structured personal interview, both the content and the scoring criteria for these activities must be kept confidential.

Guarding the integrity of the exercises is a major concern for any assessment center, for like any psychometric device, its validity, reliability, and credibility are highly dependent upon candidates' having little or no foreknowledge of specific item content. In addition, assessment center exercises are deliberately designed and field tested to measure very specific skills, and the assessors have been rigorously trained in the proper observation and scoring of each activity. Hence, exercise substitutions or modifications cannot be made extemporaneously without severely damaging--if not destroying--the validity and reliability of the center. Should the details of a particular exercise become known, the integrity of the center is compromised until a new or alternate exercise can be put into place.

One of the strengths of the NASSP model is its contractual insistence on the confidentiality and integrity of the various exercises. Adopting school districts must agree to use only the proper materials, which are available from NASSP for a minimal fee of about $30 per assessee. In addition, districts must agree not to copy or distribute any of the materials. The purpose of this is not so much to protect NASSP copyright as it is to ensure the overall integrity of the model.

During our visit to Howard County, we were struck from the outset by the district's concern for Center security. While we had expected the participants' assessment reports to be closely guarded, we were somewhat surprised to discover a perhaps even greater administrative concern for security of substantive Center materials. This carried over to Center participants and assessors, who, while very forthcoming and candid in general, consistently refused to reveal to us more than the broadest parameters of the various exercises and scoring systems.

In spite of such tight security, it seemed to us almost inevitable that there will be some leakage over time. A number of our Howard County informants expressed this same conclusion. And in fact, the very tightness of the district's security in and of itself suggests the inevitability of leakage.

Recognizing this, several of our informants expressed a desire for alternate exercises, rather like alternate test forms. Both assessors and assessees felt that alternate forms of each exercise would not only aid security, but also would in general strengthen the Center's ability to measure performance. NASSP has responded to this concern (which has been expressed by other sites in addition to Howard County), and is currently developing additional exercises for the purpose of strengthening the measurement of certain skills dimensions as well as providing alternate forms.[8]

Each Assessment Center is a major event in the professional lives of both the assessors and the participants. For the latter, the Center is a two-day experience; for the former, a five-day affair. And, the assessors' days are long, often running well into the evening and spilling over into the weekend. In addition, the psychometric demands of each Center require close scheduling of individual assessors and candidates. Specifically, each assessor must observe each candidate at least once, and each candidate must be observed by multiple assessors on each exercise. Further, candidates must not be observed for most of the time by the same observers, and the observer sub-team for each exercise should be racially and sexually balanced insofar as possible. Finally, in addition to conducting the observations, the assessors must find the time to record their observations while they are still fresh, for the final evaluations of candidates are dependent on the assessors' evidentiary records of the participants' behavior during the various exercises. While the NASSP model provides standards and guidelines on the types of candidate behavior to look for and record on each exercise, it cannot compensate for assessors' memory decay. Hence, it becomes imperative that the assessors stretch to maintain comprehensive, on-the-spot recordings of candidate behavior.

---

[8] Alternate exercises are currently being developed by Hersey and Schmitt. Hersey anticipates that two alternates for each Center exercise will be available by early 1983.

Ensuring this timeliness is the responsibility of the Center's director (and, in Howard County, Co-Director). Even more importantly, the Center leaders must constantly press the assessors for behavioral recording. As Howard County's Director, Assistant Superintendent Farmer, commented, "You can't write down just anything. It has to be an objective behavioral recording. One of the biggest problems of the Director is to maintain reliability and to keep personal value systems [of the assessors] from creeping in." And, in the same vein, Farmer noted, "You do bring human values [to the Center]. It's hard to take away what you believe. And when you know the candidates you have to fight what you know about them and be objective about what's happening at that moment [in the Center]."

The logistical demands can also become complex for adopting districts. The timelines are tight, and both the participants and the assessors are continually moving from location to location and exercise to exercise. In addition, the paper flow must be managed. Each assessor is filling in multiple reports on each candidate, and, by the time the two days of exercises are completed, each candidate will have received several reports from several assessors. While NASSP provides technical assistance and materials to help with these logistics, they are largely the province of the adopting district. Howard County, after considerable planning and trial and error, has developed very efficient and streamlined logistical procedures for its Centers.

All assessors' reports and screenings of participants' behavior during the various exercises are completed by the end of the second day. The next three days are given over to group meetings of the assessors, during which each candidate's performance is discussed. Each candidate is given a summary score according to behavioral standards and guidelines based on the evidence provided by the assessors' reports prepared during the exercises. At the end of the discussion of each candidate, the group assigns a final rating to the candidate's performance. (Comparative rankings of candidates are not done.)

During the discussions, each candidate is assigned a "watchdog" assessor who has a dual role. On the one hand, after the discussions are concluded the "watchdog" writes the final report on the candidate, summarizing all of the data and evaluations on each exercise and skills dimension. On the other hand, the "watchdog" challenges scorings and ratings during the discussions to make certain they are fairly grounded in recorded evidence. For instance, if an assessor declares that a candidate did not show good judgment in one of the exercises designed to measure this skill, the "watchdog" will immediately challenge for specific behavioral evidence to substantiate this assertion. This challenge is motivated not only by the standard of fairness, but also by the "watchdog's" own need for accurate behavioral data in preparing the written report, wherein all comments about the candidate must be clearly documented and supported.

The fundamental aim of the group discussion is to arrive at a consensual final rating of each candidate. The basic NASSP model provides various numerical scoring techniques and steps in quantification to aid in this process. In addition, adopting districts may increase the quantification of this stage if they so choose. Howard County has taken this route, and has also developed its own forms and charts to help guide the group through the discussions. For reasons of space and confidentiality, we will not attempt to detail these features here but will note that the various charts and forms appear to be very useful.

Without exception, the Howard County assessors characterized these group sessions as "rigorous," "challenging," "demanding," and "highly objective." One assessor captured the general perception by commenting, "It's the hardest work I ever did in my life. You have to be able to support what you write [in an exercise report] and subject it to review by other people. There's even a language to it--for instance, 'sensitivity' is defined and you must talk precisely about this. And, too, strong biases of the strongest willed person on an interview committee can carry the day, but even the strongest individual on the assessor team can't carry it after the whole team makes their contributions." (Interestingly enough, this particular informant characterized himself as having been "very anti-assessment center before going through as an assessor.")

Howard County has also chosen to extend the precision of the final rating assigned to each candidate in order to better discriminate its high performers. The general NASSP Design Model requires only that the assessors give a recommendation "as to whether the participant should be placed as an assistant principal or principal" (see Exhibit 6-1, Item 5). Howard County has elected to use three levels of ratings: (1) Not Recommended; (2) Recommended; and (3) Highly Recommended. The reason for this is that the district is firmly committed to using the Center primarily for promotional purposes at this stage and feels, as Farmer commented, "We just have to bite the bullet and cut it so we know what we've got." (Of the Howard County candidates assessed as of October 1982, 50 percent had received a rating of "Not Recommended".)[9]

It is important to note that Howard County's commitment to rigorous use of the Center as a tool in making decisions about promotions has had an impact on both its localized adaptations of the NASSP model and the way in which the Center is fitted into its basic principal selection process (discussed in the next section). For instance, it is this commitment that led to Howard County's decision to place the Center under the auspices of the Assistant Superintendent and to train its key line officers as assessors. In addition, the decision to extend quantification of the final ratings and the consensual scoring efforts directly reflects this drive. Other adopters less concerned with discriminating among candidates and/or more interested in using Centers as diagnostic tools for staff development may wish to pursue different paths.

When the assessors' discussions are complete and final ratings have been assigned, a detailed report is prepared on each candidate by his "watchdog" assessor. The reports cover areas of strength, needs for improvement, and training and development recommendations. The reports are precise and behaviorally cast, and each of the twelve skill areas is addressed in some detail.

---

[9] In a recent phone conversation, Assistant Superintendent Farmer noted that Howard County is also strongly committed to using the Center for staff development, as evidenced by its membership in NASSP's Developmental Consortium and the assignment of the district's Director of Staff Development, Dr. Lee Smith, as Co-director of the Center. However, at this point in time, selection has a priority.

The assessment report is then given to the candidate and discussed in "a confidential feedback interview." In Howard County, this interview is conducted by Farmer himself, who evinces deep concern that both successful and unsuccessful participants learn and grow from their experience. The feedback interviews may run as long as three and one-half hours, and generally lasts at least two hours. And, depending on the candidate's performance, the feedback may include counseling against further administrative competition. This does not mean that candidates who receive a "Not Recommended" rating are automatically disqualified from consideration. In fact, considerable effort is made to identify corrective developmental opportunities and resources for the candidate. Further, candidates may seek re-assessment after two years.

In sum then, the NASSP Assessment Center is a rigorous psychometric tool that involves a group of trained observers in the behavioral evaluation of aspiring educational administrators as they perform tasks designed to empirically measure their skills. The keys to its operation are: (1) its use of simulations that tap a wide variety of behaviors demanded of school administrators; and (2) rigorous training of the assessors in the requisite observational and scoring techniques. The NASSP model does allow for local adaptations of certain features, as well as full local control of critical policy aspects of using the Center (e.g., for promotion, for staff development, or for both) and integrating it into ongoing personnel systems.

Contextual Features

Howard County's NASSP Assessment Center is being implemented in the administrative context of an already highly professionalized approach to principal selection, which has "grown up with the district" over the past 14 years. Both the development of this process and the decision to seek still further improvement by means of the Assessment Center have been stimulated by certain features of the district's larger community context.

Howard County is both a traditional, rural community and a progressive, affluent suburb of the cities of Baltimore and Washington, D.C.

Situated in the middle of the Baltimore-Washington corridor, the county's agrarian roots are seen in the town of Ellicott City, which is one of the oldest communities in America, and its new sophistication and modernism in the now dominant city of Columbia. A completely planned community, Columbia has sprung up from the pasturelands in the last 14 years, attracting worldwide attention for the many innovative features and completeness of its planning. It is important to note that this planning has included the educational system, for, from its beginning, the placement of schools and the quality of education have been seen as critical to Columbia's viability as a community.

The first residents moved into Columbia in 1967, and since then the population in the corridor has increased at the rate of 50,000 per year. Howard County--and its school system--have been transformed by both the size and the nature of this growth. On the one hand, the population of Howard County has quadrupled in the past 20 years to reach its present 125,000 (largely concentrated in the city of Columbia). On the other hand, much of this influx has consisted of affluent, highly educated professionals who work in the government, business, and scientific centers of Baltimore and Washington. For instance, more than half of Columbia's heads of households who work in either the city or the surrounding area are professionals. And, 82 percent have either attended or completed college, while more than 30 percent have participated in graduate education. "The county," however, remains rural, and the households and labor force outside of Columbia are far less professional and affluent.

Columbia's steadily increasing influence over the customs and life of Howard County in general and the school system in particular cannot be overstated. In 1967, Columbia's population constituted 20 percent of Howard County's population; in 1980, 43 percent. Projections are that by 1990, Columbia will constitute over 50 percent. Since this growth was anticipated and since Columbia was deliberately planned to attract exactly the sort of population it now has, its impact on the school system could also be planfully anticipated.

As the first step in the transformation of Howard County's school system, a new superintendent was hired in 1968 and given the specific mandate to build a modern system in step with the "New City," as Columbia is sometimes called. Dr. Thomas Goedeke, who is still superintendent today, arrived from Baltimore to take charge when the district was half its present size of 25,000 students and 46 schools (27 elementary, 11 middle, and 8 high). Dr. Goedeke has enjoyed a rare opportunity to build a system from the ground up. In his own words, "It has been a fine experience. I didn't have to tear down to initiate something new. I had an opportunity to plan and set in things from the beginning along with the growth of Columbia. And, I had a community that wanted a top-level school system, that's articulate, intelligent and knew the value of education. The County government also supported us with funding."

One of the first actions that Goedeke took upon assuming office was, in his own words, "to open up the principal selection process rather than having one man [the superintendent] making all the decisions." The process that he established is still operating in its basic form today, with the Assessment Center fitted in to provide better screening of candidates. As described shortly, it relies upon broad-based participation of the principals themselves and the line administrators who supervise them. Goedeke chose to open up the process in this fashion because he believes it essential to his own final appointment decision. As he said, "I really felt it brought to bear the thinking of those familiar with the job on a daily basis. It also strengthened [decision-making] by bringing to bear perspectives of different levels of the job [e.g., principals themselves and their line supervisors]. It assists me greatly to know that recommendations are based on real-life considerations plus the usual transcripts and applications and certifications."

This system of selection was universally viewed by our other informants, many of whom were part of the system in the "old days," as a marked improvement upon the previous process. The earlier system was characterized by several as "political," and dependent upon one's connection with the few, closely held power centers of the old community. As one respondent said, "If you had a 'godfather' you were in." Cronyism, patronage, reward for long service, and even "being a nice guy" were the important criteria for selection as a principal. Since the watershed of Goedeke's appointment, the movement towards increased professionalism in principal selection has been strong and steady. Momentum was added during the mid-1970s when, as several of our informants noted, "a lot of the old-timers left [retired] and were replaced." Today, installation of the Assessment Center is seen simply as one more step in the same direction.

Howard County's principal selection process begins with the publication of a general vacancy announcement. The announcement is for the position of principal rather than for a position at a specific school, for lateral transfers may be made at the discretion of the administration. The vacancy announcement is posted throughout the district and also is promulgated to various universities and professional organizations along the Eastern seaboard. In addition, announcements are often placed in professional journals and newsletters (depending on the particular requirements of the position). Finally, letters of announcement are sent to individuals who have requested such notification from Personnel.

The district usually does not advertise in the national media, and advertises in the local papers (only when vacancies occur in the summer after school staff are gone. Further, no special advertising is done to attract minorities or women. Howard County has good representation of both of these groups--particularly the former--among its school administration ranks. For instance, the proportion of black principals equals or exceeds the proportion of black children (around 18 percent) at all levels. Hence, special recruitment is not an issue. In addition, the district usually has a number of outside candidates for each position as a result of distribution of announcements to universities and professional organizations.

The vacancy announcements specify the basic criteria. In addition to meeting these, serious candidates for both the assistant principalship and the principalship are expected to demonstrate leadership ability and skills through service on various committees and task forces; service on grade and school planning teams; attendance at board meetings; active membership in local professional organizations; and effective curriculum planning/ instructional leadership and organizational work in their current positions.

In response to the vacancy announcement, candidates apply to Personnel, which checks to ensure that the basic certifications and credentialling requirements have been met. Candidates' qualifications are then reviewed and screened by the Screening and Interview Committee, which both determines who is to be interviewed for a position and conducts the interviews. The Committee consists of five members, including the Director of Personnel and the Director of the grade level being screened. The remaining three memberships are divided between other administrators at the level being screened (principal or assistant principal) and central office supervisors for the appropriate level. Committees are also balanced for race and sex.

Committee members individually review the Personnel folders containing transcripts, work histories, letters of recommendation, and evaluations, and suggest eliminations. Candidates are not rated or ranked. Rather, each individual Committee member studies the data in each folder and makes his or her own judgment whether or not to invite a candidate for interview. This process is coordinated by Personnel, and Committee members conduct the reviews at their own convenience. Candidates are not eliminated from the interview unless a majority of the Committee so desire. In practice, this means that very few applicants are eliminated. For instance, one informant noted that as many as 40 applications may be received for a principalship, and as many as 37 or 38 candidates interviewed. At times, three full days of interviewing may be required.

The interviews themselves are structured and last about 30 minutes. The Personnel department develops a list of interview questions, which tend to focus on both specific "what if" situations and the candidates' plans for addressing specific school needs (e.g., involving the community). The Committee members review these questions in group session prior to the first interview, adding or deleting items as they desire. Once standardized, the questions are then asked of each interviewee. Within the last year, Howard County has began to require candidates to respond extemporaneously to a written essay question immediately prior to the interview. The Committee also receives this response, and ask questions about it.

As each candidate is interviewed, each Committee member individually completes a four-point rating form on the candidate's written communication skills as demonstrated in the essay, oral communication skill showed during the interview, and substantive response to each of the interview questions. General, open-ended comments on each candidates are also added.

Following all interviews, the Committee votes on each candidate, using a secret ballot. Candidates are not discussed prior to the balloting. However, if they desire, Committee members may re-examine candidates' essay questions or Personnel folders, as well as review their rating forms. At this stage, then, the Committee members are expected to bring to bear several pieces of information on each candidate: (1) the Personnel folder; (2) the structured interview; (3) the written essay; and now, (4) the Assessment Center report.

The Committee's goal at this stage is to recommend up to three to five finalists to Superintendent Goedeke for his further consideration. However, the Committee is not bound to recommend in rank order. For instance, three candidates might be revealed by the ballot to far exceed the remainder. The Committee might choose to recommend these in rank order of number of votes received, or, if the vote is very close, to recommend alphabetically.

Once the balloting is complete, the Committee holds a discussion to document its reasons for recommending the finalists. The Personnel Director summarizes this documentation for the superintendent's consideration in the next phase of the process. In addition to this summary, the superintendent also receives the Personnel materials on each candidate (including the Assessment Center report).

The final appointment decision is made by Superintendent Goedeke, subject to Board approval. Before making his decision, Goedeke--who has been very careful to stay out of the selection process until this point in order to avoid any appearance of influencing the process--conducts his own unstructured at least an hour (usually longer). During this time, Goedeke seeks to assess a variety of factors, which by his own account include "general intelligence, judgmental thinking, how they respond and react, how they might be able to work with children and parents as well as staff, and the needs of the particular school in question." For their part, candidates characterized this final stage of the process as "challenging," "probing," "relaxed and comfortable but very intense."

Once his final decision is made, Superintendent Goedeke presents his recommendation to the Board. Howard County's School Board was characterized by our informants as highly professional, very active and interested. Hence, the Board, while it virtually always accepts Goedeke's recommendation, is usually deeply interested in the reasons for a particular appointment.

In sum, Howard County's principal selection process is highly professionalized and has been so since well before the Assessment Center arrived on the scene. Candidates view each step as a stiff challenge, and perceive competition to be intense. While there may be some sense remaining of "putting in my time" in the entry position of assistant principal, the majority of candidates do not appear to feel that there are any guaranteed strategies for securing a principalship beyond hard and effective work in present job assignments and all of the extra committees, task forces, planning teams, and so forth, in which viable candidates are expected to participate. As one said, "You've really got to put in the hours [of work] if you want to be a principal in this district."

Given a principal selection process which is already of high quality, where does the Assessment Center fit in? In Howard County's eyes, the Assessment Center primarily provides a method for more rigorously and finely discriminating among candidates. Data from the Center constitute another very important piece of information for the Interview Committee, and for Superintendent Goedeke as he makes his final decision.

This drive to more finely discriminate draws its energy from three sources. The rapid growth of the Howard County school system is over, and the student population is beginning to drop a bit. While the community's population is expected to continue to increase, the rate of development will not be nearly as rapid as in the last decade. Further, far fewer of the newcomers are projected to have school-age children. Hence, the school district anticipates opening very few, if any, new schools. In fact, plans call for closing two elementary schools within the next few years. This means, of course, far fewer school administrator positions to go around. From the positive side of the district's perspective, this offers an opportunity to skim the cream. As one top administrator said, "We want--we have to--pick only the very best for our schools." On the more negative side, another commented, "Since we have so few vacancies and have to promote so much from within, we have to be really careful. Our past mistakes don't move on like they used to in high mobility times."

Second, the community that the schools serve has become increasingly demanding, chiefly due to the influence of Columbia. Parents are very active and vocal, and by all reports, will unhesitatingly complain if they are dissatisfied with a school's operations. Further, many of the parents are professionals with very demanding visions of both educational quality and educational leadership. As one top administrator said, "The average person can't make it as a principal here given our parent community. Only high-caliber principals can sit across the desk from doctors, lawyers, executives. We don't have time to let our principals learn on the job here--our citizens wouldn't allow it."

Third, the basic selection process described earlier has not been free of problems and limitations. While "clean as a hound's tooth" in the words of one informant, it has not always predicted job performance successfully. As another said, "We had some people who looked really good in the interviews and then really bombed out on the job." In addition, though desegregation has never been an issue in Howard County and the ratio of black administrators is high, there have been some rumbles about equity in appointments. As another of our interviewees commented, "We had a couple [of equity cases] that we're not particularly proud of. It made us realize that we couldn't guarantee 100 percent that we weren't hiring [the rejected candidate] for specific job-related reasons." Further, our informants universally commented that there are differences among Howard County schools in their "difficulty to run." Some schools are far more demanding than others in terms of their parents and community, for instance. Finally, many of our interviewees commented that the basic selection process does not provide definitive feedback to the candidate. One may apply repeatedly, go through interviews indefinitely, never receive an appointment, and never know why. And, from the district's perspective, the repeated screening and interviewing of so many candidates is expensive and time-consuming.

The Assessment Center is viewed by Howard County administrators as a means of addressing all of these issues. On the one hand, the Center's ability to discriminate will reduce the candidate pool (probably by half or better) and provide more information about each candidate that is recommended. On the other hand, the district hopes that this information will increase the ability to "select the best" and to place those selected in the appropriate school (depending upon which skills dimensions a particular school might especially require). In addition, the Center will increase the district's certainty of due process by standardizing assessment of specific job-related skills. Finally, the Center will provide definitive feedback to the candidates themselves.

Special Implementation Issues

With these goals in mind, Howard County is fitting its Assessment Center into its basic selection process in two stages. The first, or transition, stage began in November 1980, with the training of the first group of assessors, and will end in late fall 1982, when all eligible candidates (those with the proper certification) have been through the Center. During this transition period, the district is using the Center to provide additional information on candidates for use by the Screening and Interview Committee, and, should candidates make it into the finals, for the Superintendent's consideration. Candidates for school administrator positions are not required to go through the Center in order to apply for a position, although they are urged to do so. Further, candidates who choose not to go through are not penalized in the competition for having made this choice.

In addition, during the transition phase, policy requires that three of the five Screening and Interview Committee members be trained assessors. Since the Director of Personnel and each of the three Directors of Instruction are trained, this always accounts for two of the three. A sufficient number of principals, supervisors, and other administrators have been trained so that recruitment of one more assessor from these ranks is not a problem.

However, the fact that some members of the Committee fully understand the Assessment Center and its results while others do not, as well as the fact that some candidates for a particular position have been assessed while others have not, have proved rather problematic during this implementation phase. For instance, two principalships have been filled since the Center began. In both instances, some of the candidates had been assessed, while others had not. Our informants noted that this made it difficult for everyone--the candidates, the Committee, the Assessment Center staff (including assessors not directly involved in these particular selections), the Superintendent, and the Board. As one Committee member commented, "I was frustrated . . . you can't realize or appreciate the Assessment Center results until you see what the candidates go through." And, as another said, "It's hard to know what weight to give the Assessment Center results when some have been through it and some haven't."

This problem seems virtually insoluble for any implementing district, for it may take a year or two to assess all the interested and eligible candidates (Howard County has 72), and appointments must be made during this time. The problem was dramatically exacerbated for Howard County when the appointments to the only two open principalships of this period were secured by candidates who had not yet been assessed. In both cases, the winners were outstanding candidates, highly recommended by the Committee, and each with long service in administrative roles. Nonetheless, the "Assessment Center folks"--both assessors and candidates--found it discouraging that non-assessed candidates had won the race. As one said, "Feeling ran pretty high. It wasn't because [the appointees] weren't good--they are. But people just felt like why are we doing all this work if it isn't going to be used!"

Howard County's experience during this transition period also brought up another issue: "How do you handle outside candidates?" This is particularly problematic when the outsider is an experienced and successful principal of some years standing. Logistics and costs make it virtually impossible to hold Assessment Centers for outsiders. In addition, there is some question about the technique's appropriateness for assessing long-term administrators in a selection (rather than developmental) situation. Yet, the district does not wish to ban outsiders outright, or to miss hiring the outstanding external candidate.

As our visit progressed, it seemed increasingly evident to us that the first of these issues is largely a transition difficulty that any district implementing an Assessment Center will probably have to endure, at least until a large enough pool of assessed candidates has been created. As Howard County discovered, the need to make appointments does not wait until all the qualified and able aspirants have been assessed. And, a district cannot refuse to consider unassessed candidates during these early stages without seriously short-changing itself (and the candidates).

While this is a difficulty that will disappear with time as all candidates are given an opportunity to participate in the Center, the issue of the outside candidates is not so amenable to solution. Unless the district openly disqualifies outsiders, which it emphatically does not wish to do, any competition for a principalship may generate a mixed pool of candidates, including both assessed insiders and unassessed outsiders.

Another issue that will not disappear with time is the question of how much weight to give Assessment Center results in comparison with other information available for candidates, such as training and work histories, evaluations, and supervisors' recommendations. During Howard County's transition phase, weights on the various pieces of information were not specified. The Screening and Interview Committees were simply instructed in the meaning and strength of the Center results, and urged to recognize them as "very important" where they were available.

The Committees were successful in doing this, although not without some struggle and discomfort (particularly for those members not trained as assessors). It was easiest where the results confirmed or clarified and sharpened the impressions of a candidate suggested by his personnel folder or interview performance, as was generally the case. As one Committee member not trained as an assessor noted, "None of the Assessment Center results were in opposition to my own assessment, based on the personnel folder and the literature. [The results] helped to clarify my thoughts."

The success of the committee aside, however, our informants expressed considerable differences of opinion about how much weight should be given to Center results in comparison with other pieces of information. And, the variation was almost as great within groups of informants as between groups. For instance, some assessors felt that the Center results should be weighted as much as 70 percent, with all other information accounting for 30 percent. Others felt emphatically that the results "should be extremely important, but never the deciding factor." Still others felt that the Center results should count for no more than 20 percent, or even that the weight should vary depending on the specific needs of the particular school in question. (The latter is more a diagnostic-prescriptive approach to placement, where a candidate strong in certain skills dimensions is placed at a school in need of those specific strengths.) We encountered this same range of opinion among candidates, central administrators, and other informants. Several expressed what seemed to be a potential consensus or middle ground position that Assessment Center results should outweigh the structured interview and equal the candidates "track record" (work history, evaluations and recommendations).

At the time of our visit, Howard County was wrestling with all three of these policy questions: (1) Should the Assessment Center be required of all candidates? (2) How should outside candidates be handled in relation to the Assessment Center? (3) What weight is to be given to Assessment Center results in comparison with other information? A study committee had been appointed by Superintendent Goedeke, with instructions to present a written report to him in June 1982. The Center's director, Assistant Superintendent Farmer, anticipates that these issues will be satisfactorily resolved and new policies in place by January 1983, signalling the beginning of the second or full implementation stage for Howard County's NASSP Assessment Center.

Perceptions of Participants

Howard County staff are very positive, even enthusiastic, about their Assessment Center. Somewhat surprisingly, this extends to staff who have not participated in a Center and to participants who did not perform as well as they might have hoped.

For instance, our informants (even the most critical) universally felt that the Center greatly improves the "fairness," "objectivity," and "accuracy" of the selection process. As one informant commented, "The chances of a candidate's being well known by all assessors are not too great; we have a mix of assessors--elementary, secondary, etc. Even those who know a person well are surprised by how they handle themselves in an assessment center. We're looking for evidence. The press for evidence forces you in a far superior way than ever before to eliminate the influence of a prior relationship. This is one of the strengths of an assessment center." Similarly, another noted, "It's the most objective way we know of at this time. It has withstood court tests. It's unbiased, objective." And another commented, "Although there are subjective ratings, we still have to come to a consensus on what that means. We have to give support for our number ratings. Others can shoot holes in them."

From the participants' point of view, the results of the Center may have been rather painful to receive, yet, even when this was the case, the candidates do not attack the fairness of the Center. As one said, "I think the Center measures potential with a good amount of accuracy. There are so many areas that are assessed. It's not as thought you get only one rating. You can fail in one area but shine in another. If you fail consistently across all activities in a dimension, that's a pretty good indication [of a weakness]. I wasn't too surprised at the results of my own assessment. The one area that I knew needed improvement showed up as an area for improvement."

However, the Center does not escape criticism, which staff give in the sincere context of "working to improve it even more." For instance, several of our informants expressed some concern about whether or not the two days of Center exercises reflect long-term job performance. As one participant noted, "It was a very definitive, accurate assessment of what happened during those two days. I don't know that it is reflective of what you have done in ten years previous to that. If a person goes into the Assessment Center and performs as they typically do, it can be very accurate; but someone could go in there and overperform or underperform. But I have no reason to doubt its objectivity. I think they do everything they can to make it objective. I think the number of assessors they have helps that."[10]

In addition, almost everyone we spoke with expressed the opinion that some of the 12 skills dimensions are better measured with greater strength than others, as discussed previously. In terms of the Center's ability to measure the five factors that Howard County has chosen to emphasize, the interviewees uniformly expressed firm confidence. The measurement of other dimensions was viewed less confidently; however, no dimension was regarded as completely invalid.[11]

More important to many of our informants than the psychometric strength or weakness of the various skills dimensions was the fact that, in their view, several important facets of the principalship are not--and cannot be--measured at all by the Center. For example, one informant noted, "It's not able to measure the temperament of an individual in various on-the-spot situations--the humanistic aspects of the person's relationships with other adults and with children." As another commented, "There's no measurement for building management, physical plant management, financial management." These natural limitations suggest to many that the Center should always be used in conjunction with other information, particularly actual job performance in current positions. And, as discussed previously, many of our informants also expressed strong desire for and interest in obtaining additional exercises for the Center as a means of strengthening its ability to measure all of the 12 skills dimensions.

---

[10] Hersey notes that the final year of the validity study strongly supports the Center's ability to predict job performance successfully.

[11] Hersey notes that the validity study has indeed revealed some differences in strength of measurement across the various skills dimensions. Personal Motivation, Range of Interests, and Educational Values appear to be less well measured than the other nine dimensions. Nevertheless, the validity study also shows that all 12 dimensions--as currently measured--have relevance for job performance.

Finally, several informants expressed concern about the impact on candidates who are not successful at the Center. As one commented, "We put so much credibility into the Assessment Center, and a person is devastated when he gets a Not Recommended." Howard County gives much attention to counseling and follow-up support to help poor performers accept the results of the Center. However, negative feedback is undoubtedly sometimes "very difficult to hear," as one participant phrased it. On the other hand, several candidates we spoke with commented that it was helpful, even "a relief," to receive the sort of precise negative feedback provided by the Center. One informant summed up this perspective neatly with the comment, "I wish somebody had told me this years ago. I could have done something about it sooner!"

In sum, Howard County is very pleased with its Assessment Center. While there is room for both technical and policy improvement, this is viewed as a challenge, and the "pros" are almost universally regarded as outweighing the "cons." The district sees both direct and ancillary benefits from the Center. The former encompass greater fairness and objectivity in selection, as well as much more information about staff capabilities in general. The latter include more and better communication among staff across grade levels, as assessors and candidates mix and mingle in the Centers, and ripple-effects as assessors generalize what they have learned about evaluating and selecting staff to their individual domains.

The Future

NASSP and Howard County each anticipate increasing reliance on the Assessment Center for both principal selection and staff development.

For the next year or so, Howard County will concentrate on refining its general promotional policies to more completely utilize the Center. As noted earlier, at the time of our site visit a policy study committee had been appointed by Superintendent Goedeke with instructions to report recommendations in June, 1982. The committee duly made its report, and, after review and discussion by staff, Superintendent Goedeke carried several recommendations to the Board. These were shared with us by Assistant Superintendent Farmer as we completed this report.

Before detailing them, however, we must note that as we go to press with this report, the board's formal review process is not quite completed. The proposed new policies have been introduced and "circularized" (i.e., advertised for a three-week public comment period). Public hearings with formal testimony have also been held. However, the moment of adoption has not yet arrived, for the board is not scheduled to vote on the policy until its late-August meeting. While response to the Center and the associated changes in policy has been very positive thus far, adoption of the proposed new policies is by no means completely guaranteed. Regardless of whether they are passed or not, however, the proposed new policies certainly provide strategies for dealing with critical implementation and usage issues associated with adoption of the Assessment Center.

Howard County's proposed new policies deal with the question of whether or not all internal applicants should be required to go through the Center with a firm "Yes". (Further, after July, 1985, all internal applicants must have received a "Recommend".) The one exception to this rule involves staff currently employed in administrative or supervisory positions in the district who have successfully served in the position being sought for two of the last three years (either inside or outside the system). In other words, if a candidate for a principalship is currently serving as a central administrator or supervisor, but had successfully served as a principal in some other district for two of the past three years, she would not be required to participate in the Assessment Center.

The proposed new policies deal with the question of whether outside candidates should be required to participate in the Center on two levels.

First, Howard County will extend reciprocity to other NASSP Centers for teachers from outside who wish to apply for assistant principal. In other words, if an applicant has been through another NASSP Center, Howard County will accept the results. However, Howard County will not use its own Assessment Center to screen teacher candidates from outside. Costs are too high and payoff for the district too low to justify such usage.

Second, outside principals and assistant principals who candidate for these positions in Howard County are required to participate in a one-day assessment process, which is run by the district for only those candidates who appear to be particularly outstanding. The process combines the appearance before the Interview Committee with some of the Assessment Center activities.

Finally, the proposed new policies require that all members of the Screening and Interview Committees be trained assessors.

As new promotional policies are implemented and refined and as NASSP builds up the staff development features of the model, Howard County anticipates turning increasingly to the staff development side of the equation. For instance, some district administrators foresee a day when practicing principals might be offered an opportunity to participate in the Center for diagnosis of strengths and weaknesses, followed by individually prescribed training.

For its part, NASSP is using the next year or so primarily to strengthen the developmental features of the model before making it available for widespread dissemination in 1983. As mentioned previously, NASSP has formed an Assessment Center Developmental Consortium for the purpose of building materials, strategies, and training packages for staff development in the 12 skills dimensions. The Consortium consists of several school districts--including Howard County--each of which contributes an annual fee and is represented on the Consortium's management team. The membership fees (along with NASSP's own funds) will be used to develop the materials and packages. In addition, Consortium districts (and other NASSP pilot sites) will host tryouts of development packages. NASSP is also seeking to establish a regional developmental Center site in each of its seven regions.

At a number of the university pilot sites, developmental uses of the NASSP Center in masters degree programs in administration and supervision are also being explored. These initiatives involve both entry screening and profiling of candidates for diagnostic/prescriptive purposes and incorporation of simulations and behavioral exercises as instructional techniques.

Costs and Benefits

Howard County's NASSP Assessment Center is expensive to implement and operate, as are all such efforts. The materials for the Center are not themselves expensive. By far the heaviest cost is incurred for staff time. For instance, three days are required to train each assessor at NASSP headquarters in Virginia. For each Center, each assessor is required to spend one or two days reviewing material and preparing, and then five days actually operating the Center. Further, assessors' days are long, and typically include personal time on evenings and weekends while the Center is in operation. In addition, the participants must be released from their current job responsibilities for the two days they spend in the Center. Finally, much time for feedback and counseling of candidates is required of top administrators, particularly Assistant Superintendent Farmer. As one assessor commented, "It's extremely taxing and draining. You are just limp after those five days."

However, all felt that this cost was well worth the benefit to the district. As one respondent said, "[The biggest negative] is the time involved. It's very draining, time-consuming. Assessors lose regular work time. This is not a disadvantage, but a cost. It's worth the time and effort if results are used to select the best principals for our schools. It would not be worth it if it were _just_ for staff development of candidates. Maybe it would for the principals themselves, but not for the district." In other words, viewed in the context of a deeply felt need to better discriminate among candidates, the Center's benefits far outweigh its costs to Howard County.

This appeared to be the general perception of all the various groups involved in principal selection in the district. The top administrative decision-makers feel that the Center gives them far better and more precise information than ever before. The assessors report ancillary benefits for themselves as well as a new and more penetrating way of evaluating and selecting the principals who will be their peers and subordinates. The candidates themselves feel very challenged (and often validated) by their participation. Even those who do poorly are often not surprised, and may welcome the opportunity for clear definition of weaknesses for improvement. (This is not always the case, however, and an inescapable cost of the Center is the impact on those who are not recommended for promotion.)

Only time will tell whether these benefits continue to be realized (or even increased) after the transition phase is completed. The outlook is bright, however, for Howard County staff are already bringing in a positive verdict. Given the fact that costs are always more evident than benefits during any implementation period and the fact that events rather dramatically emphasized critical policy questions (e.g., the issue of outside candidates) very early in Howard County's implementation effort, this is encouraging. It suggests that the Center has already earned a broad base of support in the district as the method of choice for meeting widely perceived needs. Hence, if it continues to live up to its early promise, Howard County's NASSP Assessment Center will no doubt quickly become a critical part of "the way principals are selected here."

APPENDIX A

PRINCIPAL SELECTION MATERIALS FROM BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

Exhibit A-1

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

PERSONNEL SERVICES

SCHOOL-BASED MANAGERIAL APPLICATION

INSTRUCTIONS

1. You must apply for each specific position to be considered. Read carefully the following instructions prior to completing the forms.
2. Print or type all information required in the space provided.
3. Indicate the specific eligibility list for which you are applying:

   Elementary Principal
   Middle Principal
   High Principal
   Vocational Center Director
   Principal Adult Center
   Principal Exceptional Student

   Elementary Administrative Assistant
   Middle Administrative Assistant
   High Administrative Assistant
   Community School Administrator
   Vocational Administrative Assistant
   Administrative Assistant Adult
   Administrative Assistant Exceptional Student Center

4. Read carefully the requirements for providing appropriate references on Page 2.
5. The Candidate's Summary of Training and Experience, pages 4-10 should be completed carefully. Be brief but specific in the space provided. Describe those experiences you feel have contributed significantly to your qualifications for this administrative position. Refer to item numbers and keep entrees in numerical order. It is very important for candidates to make an entry for each and every item, if possible. If an entry is not made, please indicate "none".
6. Section G (page 10) has been provided to give you the opportunity to provide additional information which you feel was not covered in the instrument, but should be considered with your application.
7. Pages 1, and 2, will be removed and your application will be identified only by I.D. number for rating purposes by the Vacancy Screening Committee.
8. You must submit with your application a formal resume which will be used in preparation of the School Board agenda item should you be recommended for a position.

NOTE: THE SCREENING RESULTS SHALL BE IN EFFECT FOR ONE FULL SCHOOL YEAR.

I.D. No.

☐
(Office use only)

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA
PERSONNEL SERVICES

SYNOPSIS OF EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

I hereby apply for the ______________________________ eligibility list.
state specific list

1. Name: ______________________________ ____________________
(Last First Middle) Social Security Number

2. Address: ____
(Number Street City State Zip Code)

3. Home Phone: ______________ Office or School Phone: ______________

4. Age: ________ Birthdate: ________ 5. Male ________ Female ________

6. Present Position: ______________________________________

7. Present School or Office: ______________________ Area: __________

8. Present School District: ______________________________
(Name City State)

Teaching Experience:

SCHOOL YEAR	POSITION	SCHOOL/LOCATION	NAME OF PRINCIPAL/SUPERVISOR
19__ to 19__			
19__ to 19__			
19__ to 19__			
19__ to 19__			
19__ to 19__			

Administrative Experience:

SCHOOL YEAR	POSITION	SCHOOL/LOCATION	NAME OF PRINCIPAL/SUPERVISOR
19__ to 19__			
19__ to 19__			
19__ to 19__			
19__ to 19__			

I hereby affirm that all information which is provided by me in any application process with The School Board of Broward County, Florida is and will be true and accurate and subject to verification by the District should I be selected as one of the final candidates for a post. I further realize that the District's discovery of incorrect data could be the basis for disqualification of my application.

______________ ______________________________
Date Signature of Applicant

I.D. No.

☐

(Office use only)

REFERENCES

Required References: You must list as references individuals named on Page 1 (unless that referent is retired or deceased) under whom you served for a minimum of one year* during the five years preceding the filing date of the application. It is optional to list retired referents.

NAME OF PRINCIPAL/SUPERVISOR	CURRENT POSITION	PRESENT WORK OR HOME ADDRESS

BFS:dc
#4048C Revised 5/80
Revised 3/81, 6/81

*A school year is identified as having received compensation for one day more than one-half of your assigned annual calendar.

SYNOPSIS OF EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE (CONT'D)

I.D. No.

☐

(Office use only)

Eligibility List (Please be Specific)

SUPPORTING INFORMATION - FOR VACANCY SCREENING COMMITTEE USE

Experience: Beginning with your most recent experience, list the years of full-time classroom teaching experience. Do not identify school/location by name.

SCHOOL YEAR	GRADES/SUBJECT TAUGHT	TOTAL NUMBER OF YEARS TAUGHT
19__ to 19__		
19__ to 19__		
19__ to 19__		
19__ to 19__		
19__ to 19__		

ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE: Beginning with your most recent experience, list the years of successful administrative experience under contract as Principal, Assistant Principal, Administrative Assistant. Do not identify school/location by name.

SCHOOL YEAR	GRADE LEVEL(S)	TOTAL NUMBER OF YEARS ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE
19__ to 19__		
19__ to 19__		
19__ to 19__		

EDUCATION: List college or university from which you have received a degree. Indicate the number of credits beyond your last degree. List your most recent education first.

COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY	LOCATION	MAJOR	OR CREDITS	DATES	
				FROM	TO

SPECIFIC GRADUATE COURSEWORK: Complete this section even if you are not required by Board Policy to take these courses.

	Course Title/ Number	College/ University	Credits Earned	Date Completed
School Law				
School Finance and Budgeting				
Personnel Management or Appropriate Curriculum				

Check One:
( ) I was required to take three of the above courses
( ) I was grandfathered by Board Policy from the above courses
(For applicants outside the school district please be advised that only selected employees of The School Board of Broward County were grandfathered by Board Policy.)

Certification: List all Florida certification areas that you hold and which are currently valid. Certificate Type:__________ Expiration Date:__________

Highest Acceptable Level of Training listed on Certificate (Degree): ____________________

Certification Subject Areas/Level:

BFS:dc
#4048C Revised 3/81
Revised 6/81

CANDIDATE'S SUMMARY OF TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE - SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR

In order to be considered for a specific position, this section must be completed and submitted to Personnel prior to position advertisement deadline.

I.D. No.

(Office use only)

A. Professional Skills

1. Success and experience as a classroom teacher and/or in guidance and counseling
2. Experience with special programs (remedial, Migrant, Title One, alternative education, etc.) and students of various socio-economic backgrounds
3. Participation in curriculum development and innovative teaching practices
4. Proficiency in related administrative responsibilities (department chairperson, supervision of student teacher, etc.)
5. Leadership in educational organizations, workshop presentations, supplemental positions, curriculum councils, Teacher Education Center Council, etc.

Item No.	Location and Inclusive Date(s)	Describe Experience(s)

(Continued on next page)

BFS:dc
#4048C Revised 5/80
Revised 3/81, 6/81

A. Professional Skill (Continued)

I.D. No.

(Office use only)

Item No.	Location and Inclusive Date(s)	Describe Experience(s)

BFS:dc
34048C Revised 5/80
Revised 3/81, 6/81

I.D. No.

(Office use only)

Applicants for administrative assistants positions only have to complete sections (1-5) below; applicants for principal positions, must complete all sections (1-6).

B. Organizational and Management Skills

1. Initiative in arranging special activities (assemblies, contests, drives, club sponsorship, use of community resources, etc.)
2. Work appropriately within line - staff relationships
3. Ability to identify problems, establish priorities, and implement strategies for resolution
4. Skills in administrative procedures (Contract management, teacher and noninstructional evaluation, implementing federal and state laws, as well as School Board Policies)
5. Experience in preparing student schedules and staff assignments
6. Ability to budget, administer funds and manage supplies and equipment

Item No.	Location and Inclusive Date(s)	Describe Experience(s)

BFS:dc
#4048C Revised 5/80
Revised 3/81, 6/81

B. Organizational and Management Skills (Continued)

I.D. No.

(Office use only)

Item No.	Location and Inclusive Date(s)	Describe Experience(s)

BFS:dc
#4048C Revised 5/80
Revised 3/81, 6/81

I.D. No.

☐

(Office use only)

C. Human Relations

1. Evidence of strong interpersonal skills in relationships with students, faculty, and parents
2. Contribution to positive morale within the school
3. Ability to resolve conflicts and reduce tension
4. Contribution to positive school - community interaction
5. Evidence of personal regard by faculty

Item No.	Location and Inclusive Date(s)	Describe Experience(s)

BFS:dc
#4048C Revised 5/80
Revised 3/81, 6/81

I.D. No.

(Office use only)

D. Communication Skills

1. Evidence of written communication skills (correspondence, reports, bulletins, newsletters)
2. Evidence of oral communication skills (interpersonal, group process, conducting meetings)

Item No.	Location and Inclusive Date(s)	Describe Experience(s)

E. Community Participation and Related Experience

1. Professional organization membership, community participation
2. Evidence of membership, offices held or honors attained in civic, service, youth or community organizations
3. Related experience in leadership, supervisory or management roles

Item No.	Location and Inclusive Date(s)	Describe Experience(s)

I.D. No.

(Office use only)

F. Academic/Professional Preparation

1. Evidence of additional coursework completed, degrees and/or certification held beyond the minimum requirements

2. Other training, inservice or professional development experiences (workshops, seminars, special projects, internships, etc.)

Item No.	Location and Inclusive Date(s)	Describe Experience(s)

BFS:dc
#4048C Revised 5/80
Revised 3/81, 6/81

I.D. No.

(Office use only)

G. Space provided for additional information to support your qualifications for a School-Based Managerial Position

Location and Inclusive Date(s)	Describe Experience(s)

BFS:dc
#4048C Revised 5/80
Revised 3/81, 6/81

Exhibit A-2

Social Security Number

I.D. Number

(Office Use Only)

To: ____________________

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA
PERSONNEL DIVISION -- PROMOTIONAL PERSONNEL SECTION

EXPERIENCES AND QUALITIES OF APPLICANTS FOR SCHOOL-BASED MANAGERIAL POSITIONS

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS

Name of Applicant: ____________________ Position: ____________________

DIRECTIONS: There are numerous personal qualities and professional experiences which one needs in order to become a good middle school administrative assistant. Listed below are some of them.

Select the eight (8) strongest qualities/experiences of this applicant which you have personally observed (or have personal knowledge) and place the numbers of the items in the spaces below.

For example: If you select item 1, you place a number 1 in one of the boxes below and so on.

1. Successful experience as a classroom teacher and/or guidance and counseling.
2. Participation in curriculum development and innovative teaching practices.
3. Quality of related administrative responsibilities (department chairperson, supervision of student teacher, leadership in educational and civic organizations).
4. Experience in coordinating student activities (assemblies, contests, drives, club sponsorship, use of community resources, etc.).
5. Ability to work effectively within line-staff relationship.
6. Ability to identify problems, establish priorities, and implement strategies for resolution.
7. Experience in preparing student schedules and staff assignments.
8. Exhibits exemplary skills in promoting the school discipline program.
9. Evidence of strong interpersonal skills in relationship with students.
10. Evidence of strong interpersonal skills in relationship with faculty.
11. Evidence of strong interpersonal skills in relationship with parents.
12. Evidence of contribution to positive morale within the school.
13. Evidence of contribution to positive school-community involvement.
14. Ability to communicate in writing effectively (correspondence, reports, bulletins, newsletters, etc.).
15. Oral communication skills (interpersonal, group process, conducting meetings, etc.).
16. Academic/professional preparation.
17. Evidence of being a good leader.
18. Displays good judgment.
19. Ability to respond appropriately to emergencies and tense situations.
20. Skill in the supervision of instruction.

COMMENTS: (Optional)

Period of time the applicant was under my direction: From ____________________ to ____________________

My position during this period: ____________________

Applicant's position during this period: ____________________

Location during this period: ____________________

____________________ Signature of Superordinate/Administrator

____________________ Date 19____

2/23/82

Exhibit A-2

continued

Social Security Number ☐☐☐

To: ____________________

I.D. Number ☐☐☐
(Office Use Only)

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA
PERSONNEL DIVISION -- PROMOTIONAL PERSONNEL SECTION

EXPERIENCES AND QUALITIES OF APPLICANTS FOR
SCHOOL-BASED MANAGERIAL POSITIONS

PRINCIPALS

Name of Applicant: ____________________ Position: ____________________

DIRECTIONS: There are numerous personal qualities and professional experiences which one needs in order to become a good principal. Listed below are some of them.

Select the eight (8) strongest qualities/experiences of this applicant which you have personally observed (or have personal knowledge) and place the numbers of the items in the spaces below.

For example: If you select item 1, you place a number 1 in one of the boxes below and so on.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

1. Successful experience as a classroom teacher and/or guidance and counseling.
2. Participation in curriculum development and innovative teaching practices.
3. Quality of related administrative responsibilities (department chairperson, supervision of student teacher, leadership in educational and civic organizations).
4. Experience in coordinating student activities (assemblies, contests, drives, club sponsorship, use of community resources, etc.).
5. Ability to work effectively within line-staff relationship.
6. Ability to identify problems, establish priorities, and implement strategies for resolution.
7. Experience in preparing student schedules and staff assignments.
8. Ability to prepare and manage school budget.
9. Evidence of strong interpersonal skills in relationship with students.
10. Evidence of strong interpersonal skills in relationship with faculty.
11. Evidence of strong interpersonal skills in relationship with parents.
12. Evidence of contribution to positive morale within the school.
13. Evidence of contribution to positive school-community involvement.
14. Ability to communicate in writing effectively (correspondence, reports, bulletins, newsletters, etc.).
15. Oral communication skills (interpersonal, group process, conducting meetings, etc.).
16. Academic/professional preparation.
17. Evidence of being a good leader.
18. Displays good judgment.
19. Ability to respond appropriately to emergencies and tense situations.
20. Skill in the supervision of instruction.

COMMENTS: (Optional)

Period of time the applicant was under my direction: From ____________ to ____________

My position during this period: ____________________

Applicant's position during this period: ____________________

Location during this period: ____________________

____________________ Signature of Superordinate/Administrator

____________________ 19____ Date

2/23/82

Exhibit A-3

ADMINISTRATIVE ASST.

Soc. Security Number ☐☐☐

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

PERSONNEL DIVISION — PROMOTIONAL PERSONNEL SECTION

COMMITTEE RATING FORM FOR EVALUATION OF TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE

I.D. No. ☐ (Office use only)

Name of Candidate ______________________

Position ______________________

DIRECTIONS: Evaluators must provide a mark for each item on this form. Evaluators are encouraged to write comments on the reverse side of this form.

	NOT ENDORSED (0 Points)	MARGINALLY QUALIFIED (1 Point)	ENDORSED (2 Points)	ENDORSED WITH CONFIDENCE (3 Points)	ENDORSED WITH ENTHUSIASM (4 Points)	
A. Professional Skills						
1. Success and experience as a classroom teacher and/or guidance and counseling						1.
2. Experience with special programs (remedial, Migrant, Title One, alternative ed. etc.) and students of various socio-economic backgrounds						2.
3. Participation in curriculum development and innovative teaching practices						3.
4. Proficiency in related administrative responsibilities (department chairperson supervision of student teacher, etc.						4.
5. Leadership in educational organizations, workshop presentations, supplemental positions, curriculum councils, Teacher Education Center council, etc.						5.
B. Organizational and Management Skills (Applicants for Administrative Assistants 1-5 only; applicants for principals 1-6)						
1. Initiative in arranging special activities (assemblies, contests, drives, club sponsorship, use of community resources, etc.)						1.
2. Work appropriately within line - staff relationships						2.
3. Ability to identify problems, establish priorities, and implement strategies for resolution						3.
4. Skills in administrative procedures (Contract management, teacher and noninstructional evaluation, implementing federal and state laws, as well as School Board policies)						4.
5. Experience in preparing student schedules and staff assignments						5.
[illegible]						6.
C. Human Relations						
1. Evidence of strong interpersonal skills in relationships with students, faculty, and parents						1.
2. Contribution to positive morale within the school						2.
3. Ability to resolve conflicts and reduce tension						3.
4. Contribution to positive school - community interaction						4.
5. Evidence of personal regard by faculty						5.
D. Communication Skills						
1. Evidence of written communication skills (correspondence, reports, bulletins, newsletters)						1.
2. Evidence of oral communication skills interpersonal, group process, conducting meetings)						2.
E. Community Participation and Related Experience						
1. Professional organization membership, community participation						1.
2. Evidence of membership, offices held or honors attained in civic, service, youth or community organizations						2.
3. Related experience in leadership, supervisory or management roles						3.
F. Academic/Professional Preparation						
1. Evidence of additional coursework completed, degrees and certification held beyond the minimum						1.
2. Other training, inservice or professional development experiences (workshops, seminars, special projects, internships, etc.)						2.
OVERALL PREDICTION OF SUCCESS						

______________________, 19___ ______________________
(Rater's Signature)

(FOR OFFICE USE ONLY)

☐☐☐☐☐

______________ ☐

BFS:M:lc
11/12/81

Exhibit A-4

(continued)

Sec. Security Number ☐☐☐

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

PERSONNEL DIVISION — PROMOTIONAL PERSONNEL SECTION

COMMITTEE RATING FORM FOR EVALUATION OF TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE

I.D. No. PRINCIPAL
☐
(Office use only)

Name of Candidate ______________________

Position ______________________

DIRECTIONS: Evaluators must provide a mark for each item on this form. Evaluators are encouraged to write comments on the reverse side of this form.

	NOT ENDORSED (0 Points)	MARGINALLY QUALIFIED (1 Point)	ENDORSED (2 Points)	ENDORSED WITH CONFIDENCE (3 Points)	ENDORSED WITH ENTHUSIASM (4 Points)	
A. Professional Skills						
1. Success and experience as a classroom teacher and/or guidance and counseling						1.
2. Experience with special programs (remedial, Migrant, Title One, alternative ed. etc.) and students of various socio-economic backgrounds						2.
3. Participation in curriculum development and innovative teaching practices						3.
4. Proficiency in related administrative responsibilities (department chairperson supervision of student teacher, etc.						4.
5. Leadership in educational organizations, workshop presentations, supplemental positions, curriculum councils, Teacher Education Center council, etc.						5.
B. Organizational and Management Skills (Applicants for Administrative Assistants 1-5 only; applicants for principals 1-6)						
1. Initiative in arranging special activities (assemblies, contests, drives, club sponsorship, use of community resources, etc.)						1.
2. Work appropriately within line - staff relationships						2.
3. Ability to identify problems, establish priorities, and implement strategies for resolution						3.
4. Skills in administrative procedures (Contract management, teacher and noninstructional evaluation, implementing federal and state laws, as well as School Board policies)						4.
5. Experience in preparing student schedules and staff assignments						5.
6. Ability to budget, administer funds, and manage supplies and equipment						6.
C. Human Relations						
1. Evidence of strong interpersonal skills in relationships with students, faculty, and parents						1.
2. Contribution to positive morale within the school						2.
3. Ability to resolve conflicts and reduce tension						3.
4. Contribution to positive school - community interaction						4.
5. Evidence of personal regard by faculty						5.
D. Communication Skills						
1. Evidence of written communication skills (correspondence, reports, bulletins, newsletters)						1.
2. Evidence of oral communication skills interpersonal, group process, conducting meetings)						2.
E. Community Participation and Related Experience						
1. Professional organization membership, community participation						1.
2. Evidence of membership, offices held or honors attained in civic, service, youth or community organizations						2.
3. Related experience in leadership, supervisory or management roles						3.
F. Academic/Professional Preparation						
1. Evidence of additional coursework completed, degrees and certification held beyond the minimum						1.
2. Other training, inservice or professional development experiences (workshops, seminars, special projects, internships, etc.)						2.
OVERALL PREDICTION OF SUCCESS						

______________________, 19___ ______________________
(Rater's Signature)

(FOR OFFICE USE ONLY)

BFS:M:lc
11/12/81

Exhibit A-4

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

DIVISION OF PERSONNEL SERVICES

INTERVIEW RATING FORM

Interview Started: __________

Interview Closed: __________

______________________________ Candidate's Name

______________________________ Position Applied for

Based upon the candidate's application and supporting material, references and the results of the interview, it is my professional opinion that the candidate deserves a rating of __________ points.

RATING SCALE

90-100	Endorsed with Enthusiasm
85-89	Endorsed with Confidence
80-84	Endorsed
70-79	Has Certain Qualifications but Insufficient for Endorsement
50-69	Not Endorsed

Committee members are requested to write comments below:

______________________________ Signature of Committee Member

______________ Date

11/11/81
BFS:lc

APPENDIX B

NASSP ASSESSMENT CENTER STANDARDS OF QUALITY

APPENDIX B

NASSP ASSESSMENT CENTER

Accreditation

A process by which NASSP annually evaluates and recognizes an administrative assessment center as meeting the following standards of quality.

Standards of Quality

(1) The technical design of the assessment center follows one of the recommended official NASSP models. (This includes specific attention to the simulations and exercises used, the observation and behavior recording procedures, the skill dimensions evaluated, and the procedures for integrating multiple judgments.)

(2) All assessors used in the project are trained by NASSP personnel (or those officially designated by the Association) using training procedures and materials developed by the Association and the Division of Industrial and Organizational Psychology of the American Psychological Association. These assessors must have been certified by the trainer as having performed at a minimal level of competence in specific assessment tasks.

(3) A one-day refresher course will be given by the center director to all previously trained assessors who have been inactive in the project for a period of 6 months or more. This course will follow an approved outline of topics and procedures.

(4) The assessment center has a director assigned (in addition to the required assessors) to administer the center in a professional manner with concern for the treatment of individuals, accuracy of results and overall quality of the operation. The director will

have received all training that is furnished to assessors and will have served as an assessor in an accredited center. The appointment of a director by a participating project will occur after consultation with NASSP.

(5) A physical location (called an assessment center) will conform to the prescribed site and space requirements called for in the center design and recommended by NASSP.

(6) Full documentation of each assessment center will be maintained on file for a minimum of five years for use in follow-up counseling of candidates and for research purposes.

(7) As local developmental funds are made available, each center will provide appropriate training opportunities for qualifying candidates.

(8) Participation in the NASSP Assessment Center effort implies a commitment to improving selection procedures. As part of this commitment, it is expected that each participating project will assist NASSP in research efforts to establish validity of the center process and test new exercises, simulations, materials and developmental training procedures.

(9) All centers have a general plan which addresses the following minimal considerations:

- the purpose of assessment
- the personnel to be assessed
- the qualifications of those who will be trained and used as assessors
- specific restrictions concerning personnel who will see the assessment data and how the data are to be used
- feedback procedure to participants and top management
- security of all materials used in the assessment process
- expected "life" of assessment center data--the length of time assessment data will be used for decision-making purposes